

PS2

■ australian playstation

Issue #021

MASSIVE IN-DEPTH PREVIEW

CONFLICT: VIETNAM

It's Apocalypse Now for PS2!

Splinter Cell

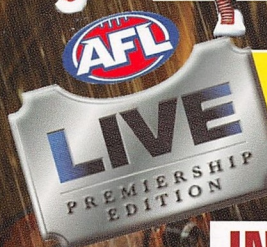
strikes back!

Sam Fisher returns in
Pandora Tomorrow



**LET'S GET
READY TO
RUMBLE...**

*Fight Night - four
page review inside!*



**PLAYED
& RATED!**

**INDEPENDENT,
AUTHORITATIVE REVIEWS**

**Rainbow Six 3 Everquest:
Champions of Norrath
The Suffering Project
Zero 2 MTX Motorax**

HOT PREVIEWS

**Bloodstone Onimusha 3
Starwars: Battlefront**

AUS \$9.95 inc. GST / NZ \$9.95 inc. GST



NO DVD? PLEASE, ASK
YOUR NEWSAGENT

WHY SHOULD THE BAD GUYS HAVE ALL THE FUN?



Untold dangers await you in this incredible journey around mystical lands. Join three tough ladies, Yuna, Rikku and Paine as they face the rising tide of evil in their fight for peace and the ultimate prize - the truth.



Enter the extraordinary universe of Final Fantasy X-2.



PlayStation 2 SQUARE ENIX

www.square-enix-europe.com

www.eagames.com.au

PSW CONTENTS

ISSUE 21

008 GLOBAL

OUR DELIGHTFUL NEWS SECTION CONTAINING ALL THE LATEST GOSS ON RATCHET AND CLANK, JAK AND DAXTER, THE NEWEST GORY DETAILS ON HITMAN CONTRACTS, CAT-WOMAN'S BOOBIES AND KILLER 7!

018 GLOBAL EXTRA

STILL HUNGRY AFTER GLOBAL? HERE'S SOME EXTRA JUICY GOODIES TO FILL YOU UP.

PREVIEWS

WE LIKE PREVIEWS BECAUSE IT GIVES US A CHANCE TO PRETEND THAT EVERY GAME EVER RELEASED OVER THE NEXT TEN YEARS IS GOING TO BE BEST GODDAMN THING EVER IN THE WHOLE HISTORY OF EVERYTHING. AND SCREENSHOTS TOO. WE LIKE SCREENSHOTS.

- 028 GETAWAY 2 INTERVIEW
- 030 CONFLICT VIETNAM
- 038 BLOODSTONE
- 040 SPLINTER CELL: PANDORA TOMORROW
- 048 ONIMUSHA 3
- 052 ONIMUSHA: BLADE WARRIORS
- 054 STAR WARS: REPUBLIC COMMANDO

FEATURES

FEATURING MORE FEATURES AND LESS... ERM... NON-FEATURES!

056 BURNOUT 3

WE'LL KEEP RAVING ABOUT THIS GAME UNTIL IT COMES OUT. AND THEN DO YOU KNOW WHAT WILL HAPPEN? WE'LL RAVE ABOUT IT SOME MORE.

064 KILLZONE

IT'S... LIKE... THE ZONE WHERE THE... ERM... KILLING HAPPENS. BLECH. HAPPILY OUR FEATURE IS LESS RETARDED THAN THIS.

REVIEWS

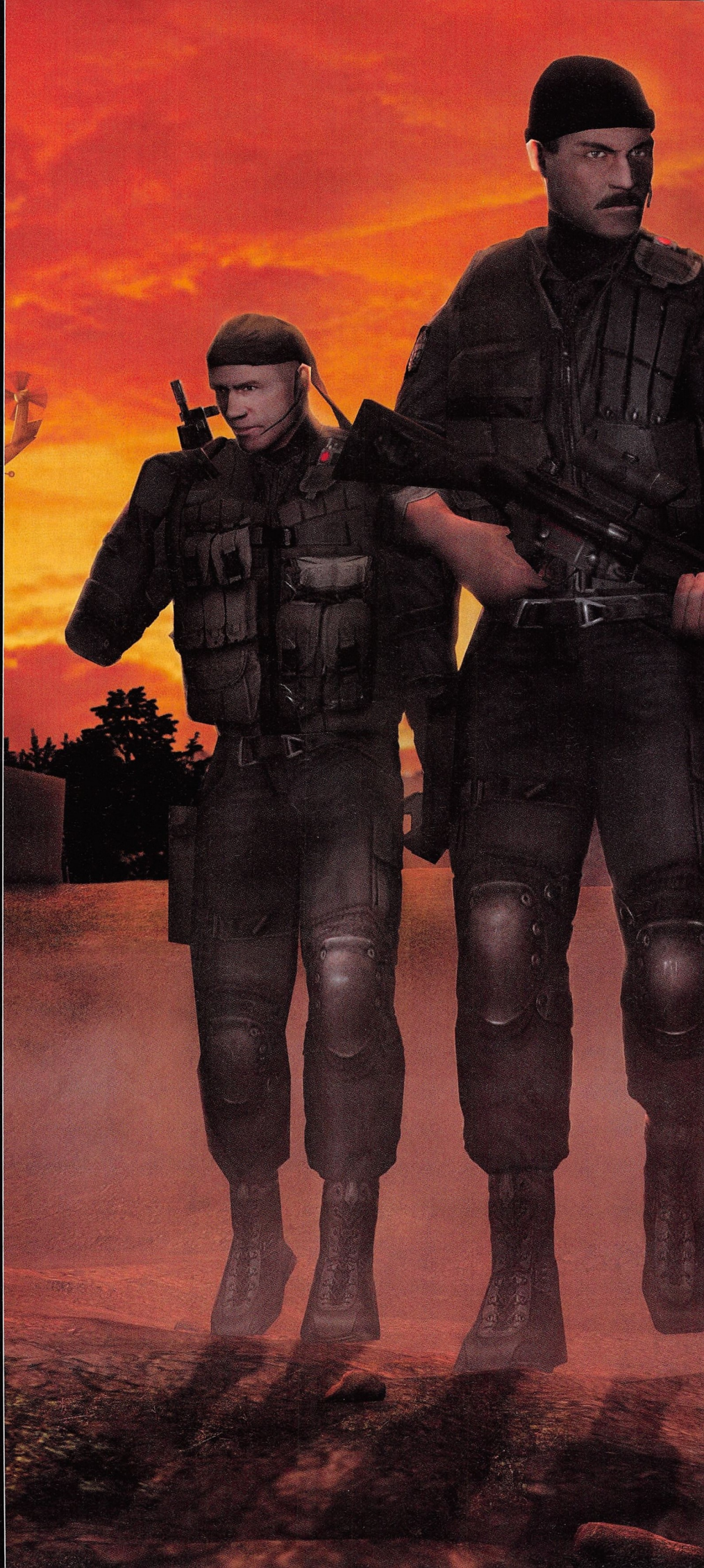
NOW WITH ADDED INTRO PAGE... AGAIN!

- 070 AFL LIVE: PREMIERSHIP EDITION
- 072 RAINBOW SIX 3
- 077 MX UNLEASHED
- 078 CHAMPIONS OF NORRATH
- 080 PROJECT ZERO 2: CRIMSON BUTTERFLY
- 082 FIGHT NIGHT 2004
- 086 THE SUFFERING
- 088 MINI REVIEWS

BACK END

ALL THE STUFF WE HID AT THE END OF THE MAG

- 090 37 THINGS TO SEE AND DO IN THUG
- 094 SUBSCRIBE TO PSW
- 096 DVD CONTENTS
- 098 NEXT MONTH





PSW WELCOME



SHOCKING The editor's chair isn't as comfortable as I thought it would be!

EDITORIAL

Hello. My name's Dan and I am the new editor of *PSW*. Come in, pull up a chair and make yourself at home – we're all friends here. If you're getting a strange feeling like you've met me somewhere before, then take a quick squiz at some of the older editions of *PSW* in your collection. Back before Jackson took the helm, around issue five or so. Yep, that's me there. The one talking about game soundtracks and writing frothing-at-the-mouth previews for titles [hello, *Tenchu*!] that ultimately turned out to be shit. It's been a long hiatus, but now I'm back. Did you miss me?

I missed you. Well, not "you" personally, but "you" in the collective sense of PlayStation gaming. A lot has gone on since I've been away, but it looks like I've come back at just the right time. What've we got the release horizon? On the hardware front, there's obviously the PSP. I think we all know that this little baby will quite probably be the most important games platform ever released. I didn't use the word "console" there because the PSP – very much like the PSX – is more than a console. It's a mobile multimedia experience.

It sounds trite and hyperbolic, but have you SEEN what this thing is going to be capable of? Sony has stated repeatedly that they're not aiming to compete with Nintendo for the handheld market and we can see why. The PSP is offering a completely different experience to consumers. This is some high-tech, hardcore techno-gadget stuff we've got here. Comparing the PSP to the GBA is like comparing a palm-pilot to a Game-and-Watch. They simply occupy completely differ-

ent universes and there's absolutely no reason why gamers can't exist in both simultaneously.

If you're sneering right now, then there's a good chance that you're probably aware that – in addition to my responsibilities on *PSW* – I'm also the editor of another rag entitled *GBA World*. Don't let this concern you. Despite initial appearances to the contrary, I am not the enemy. I am not part of some grand conspiracy formulated by shadowy corporate entities hoping to loosen Sony's iron grip on the console market. I'm just a gamer that likes games regardless of whatever platform they come on. If your love of the PS2 renders you incapable of respecting the strengths of Sony's competitors, then you're a fanboy idiot and I'm not interested in hearing from you.

PSW has always been about 100 percent PlayStation coverage and it's going to stay that way. But don't let that fool you into thinking that we're going to give Sony a free jerk-job at the expense of meaningful critical coverage. The fact that we're unofficial and completely independent means we can give you the story as we see it and we're going to do just that. You may not always agree with what you read here, but at least you can always respect that you're getting the unadulterated perspective of real PlayStation gamers.

See you next month,

/ DANIEL STAINES

EDITORIAL

EDITOR

Daniel Staines
<daniels@next.com.au>

ART DIRECTOR

Ashley Millott
<ashley@next.com.au>

ADVERTISING

NATIONAL

ADVERTISING MANAGER

Mathew Price
<mathew@next.com.au>
Direct: [02] 96990340
Facsimile: [02] 9310 2012

GAMING GROUP MANAGER

Joel Graham
<joelg@next.com.au>

PRODUCTION CO-ORDINATOR

Natalie Pedler
<natalie.pedler@next.com.au>
Ph: 02 9699 0333
Fax: 02 9310 2012

MANAGEMENT

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Phillip Keir

FINANCE DIRECTOR

Theo Fatseas

ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER

Sue Ostler
<sue@next.com.au>

OPERATIONS DIRECTOR

Melissa Doyle
<melissa@next.com.au>

CIRCULATION DIRECTOR

Rob Morey
<robm@next.com.au>

CONTRIBUTORS

John Dewhurst
Daniel Wilks
Lee Nutter
Richard Melville
Jon Brown
Joff Brown
Gary Cutlack

PRINTED CTP BY:

Webstar

DISTRIBUTION BY:

Gordon & Gotch

CUSTOMER SERVICE:

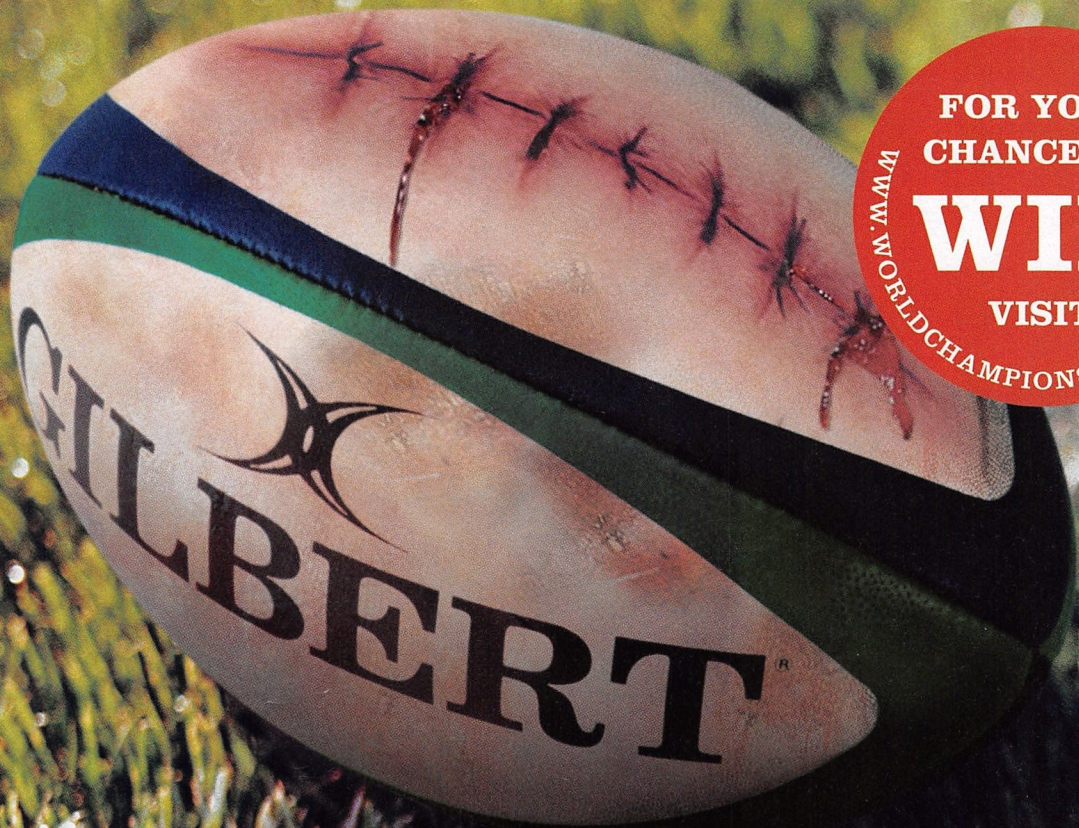
Ph 1300 65 0666
Fax 1300 65 0777

ALL COPYRIGHTS

RESERVED BY

Next Publishing Pty Ltd
ACN 002 647 645
ISSN 1329-7694
Next Gaming
78 Renwick St,
Redfern, NSW, 2016
Phone: 02 9699 0333
Fax: 02 9310 1315

TRY HARDER



FROM THE CREATORS OF JONAH LOMU RUGBY



WWW.WORLDCHAMPIONSHIPRUGBY.COM



PlayStation 2



THE ENGLAND ROSE, ALONE AND USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE ENGLAND RUGBY LOGO AND OR "TWICKENHAM" ARE TRADEMARKS OF THE RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION. © 2004 RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION. LICENSED BY COPYRIGHT PROMOTIONS; GILBERT - THE OFFICIAL BALL SUPPLIER FOR WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP RUGBY™. WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP RUGBY™ AND ACCLAIM ® & © 2004 ACCLAIM ENTERTAINMENT. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. DEVELOPED BY SWORDFISH STUDIOS. PLAYSTATION AND PLAYSTATION LOGOS ARE REGISTERED TRADEMARKS OF SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT INC. MICROSOFT, XBOX AND THE XBOX LOGOS ARE EITHER REGISTERED TRADEMARKS OR TRADEMARKS OF MICROSOFT CORPORATION IN THE U.S. AND/OR IN OTHER COUNTRIES AND ARE USED UNDER LICENCE FROM MICROSOFT. THIS GAME IS NOT SPONSORED, APPROVED OF OR IN ANY WAY CONNECTED WITH ANY PERSON (INCLUDING, WITHOUT LIMITATION, PLAYERS, TEAMS OR SPORTING BODIES) OTHER THAN THE ENGLAND RUGBY TEAM AND ITS ASSOCIATED ORGANISATIONS. WELSH PLAYER NAMES, LIKENESSES AND OTHER IMAGE RIGHTS ARE USED UNDER LICENCE FROM THE WALES PROFESSIONAL RUGBY PLAYERS ASSOCIATION.

GLOBAL

GLOBAL sponsored by


FINAL FANTASY X-2

ALL THE LATEST ON THE GAMES THAT *REALLY* MATTER.



CLEVER BOYS Enemies don't exactly stand out either.





METAL GEAR SOLID 3 BREAKS COVER!

THE KING OF STEALTH GOES BACK TO BASICS AS KONAMI REVEALS ITS MASTER PLAN TO ASSASSINATE *SPLINTER CELL* AND KILL ALL KNOWN MGS IMITATORS DEAD.

TAKING CUNNING ADVANTAGE OF *SPLINTER CELL*: PANDORA TOMORROW'S INEXPLICABLE delay, *Metal Gear Solid* creator Hideo Kojima has unveiled amazing new details of how you'll survive in the jungle in the upcoming *Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater*. Long before anybody else, PSW exclusively reveals why the original king of stealth is set to crush imitators and eat *Splinter Cell* for breakfast.

The big news is that *Metal Gear Solid 3* — set in the deep jungle during the sixties and seventies — has abandoned radars, high tech weapons and all the life-saving gadgets that were essential to previous games. Moving back to basic combat, Snake relies on camouflage suits and face paints to evade enemies or quietly slit their throats.

Apply face paint or don a camouflage suit and a Camouflage Index percentage will appear at the top of the screen, which changes depending on your appearance and how much noise you're making. The Camouflage Index percentage is also affected by your posture. For example, if Snake were to don face paint, a leafy camouflage suit and crouch

as if about to relieve himself, the Camouflage Index would hit 95% visibility, making him almost invisible. Stand, run or lose either the camouflage suit or the face paint and the percentage meter begins to drop. Create lots of noise and the percentage will become red and drop to a minus figure, meaning that a nearby soldier will be able to hear you and quickly send a thousand AK-47 bullets in your general direction.

SNAKE EYES

Given that enemies now perform pre-planned swooping searches of every blade of grass instead of merely falling asleep while guarding entrances, Snake must become even stealthier than ever before. Guards are more vocal this time around too. One scream, whistle or call for help could alert a whole troop of nearby soldiers. This means that finding the perfect hiding place has never been so important. Kojima has even mentioned a Blood Suit which is basically a blood-stained jacket that Snake can wear >



HE'S BEH-IND YOU... You can now walk extra softly to assassinate foes.



SNAKE IN THE GRASS Become as one with the swaying grass. Or die.



OH SIT DOWN Even with camo on, you'll need to crouch or you'll be seen.



TREE FELLA Use local obstacles to stay well hidden.

UNDER COVER

VENTURE INTO THE JUNGLE WITHOUT THE RIGHT CLOBBER AND DIE – BUT YOU’LL HAVE A FEW COSTUME CHANGES TOO.

It's not all about stealth, you know. The Fire Suit lets you walk through flames but alerts enemies due to the bright red colour of the wonder clobber. The Crocodile suit is handy for swimming unnoticed but makes enemies scream like frightened sheep once on land. Pair the Leaf Pattern suit with the Woodland Paint for your face, stand still and watch as you begin to blend in seamlessly with the tree trunks. At times it's genuinely difficult for the player to spot Snake. Creator Hideo Kojima has also spoken of a Blood Suit, which allows snake to play dead but hasn't confirmed whether it has been created just yet. In the meantime, take a look at the confirmed camouflage.



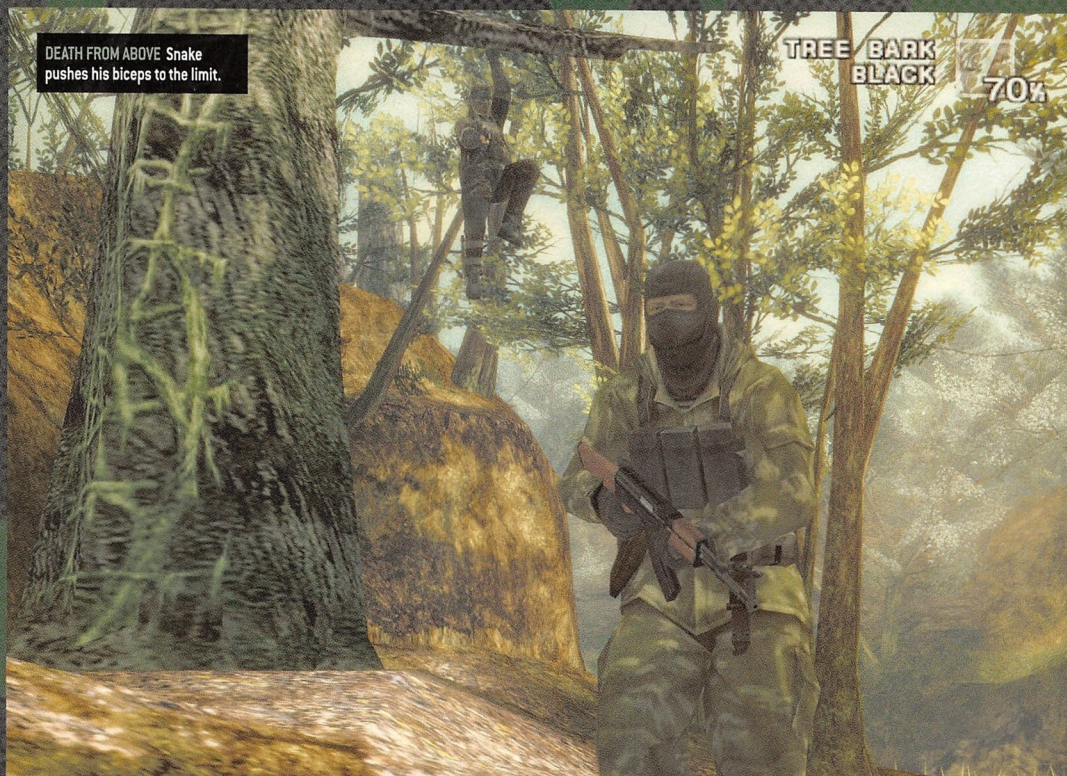
The Leaf pattern suits lets you blend in with the trees and wait for your prey.



The Fire Pattern suit protects you when flames break out in the deep bushes.



The Fire Suit is bright red which means enemies can spot you easily. Hide now!

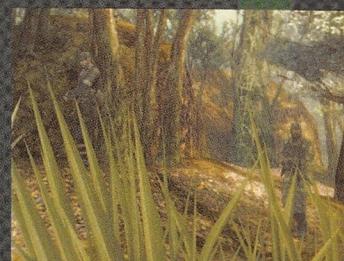


and play dead while guards investigate, hopefully ignoring his seemingly dead body. It's a risky proposition but the pay-off could be great. Imagine taking a soldier hostage after he's already left you for dead – now that could be extremely satisfying.

Familiar skills that remain in the new game include Snake's signature wall shuffling tactics and the ability to tap objects such as bee hives and tree trunks to distract guards. New skills are based around a stalking move which is used while walking, crawling or swimming alongside Snake's previously unveiled tree swinging athletics. But the big question is whether it's really our old friend Solid Snake under that camo. Our top-secret sources still suggest (and fans all around the world are adamant) that it's actually Solid Snake's dad/genetic double Big Boss. Kojima isn't saying, and knowing the enigmatic game designer we'll probably have to wait until the final minutes of the game for a definitive answer. Is it a real jungle, or a virtual simulation in the future created by robots in league with the President? We may never know.

The bad news is that *Metal Gear Solid 3* is still eons away from release, despite appearing almost finished in terms of jaw-dropping visuals and crafty enemy intelligence. In fact *Metal Gear Solid 3* isn't due in Oz until early 2005, and that's if all goes particularly smoothly. Given the usual length of time it takes for us to see top Japanese titles and the recent spate of high-profile release slips like rival *Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow*, it could end up being even later.

But don't fret, because *PSW* are on the ball and will hopefully have some rather tasty exclusive *MGS3* footage for the DVD next month. Or perhaps we'll have a preview with commentary from the Big Daddy himself, Mr. Hideo Kojima. Who knows? Guess you'll have to check back next month to find out.



WHERE THE...? It's clear that this camo lark is serious.



TRUNK FUNK We're finally getting back to his roots.

FACE PAINTING

BECOME A STONE COLD KILLER CHAMELEON.

OK, so the last time you used face paint was when you were seven years old. You were either a tiger, a clown or some sort of rodent. But this is big boy shit. Man style. Snake needs makeup to survive jungle warfare (rather than a child's birthday party) and each colour can be paired with a camouflage outfit for maximum disguise. Konami has revealed three kinds of militray issue slap currently in the game: Woodland Paint, Black Paint and Green. What, no shades of pink?



Woodland Paint is best used when hiding alongside trees and can be paired with the Leaf Pattern suit to reach a 95% Camouflage Index rating. Even you'll have trouble spotting Snake.

Green Paint is slightly brighter than Woodland Paint and matches the hue of the plants and grass on the ground. Use when slithering through weeds and behaving like a, err, snake.



BRING IT ON!

RATCHET Looks stunning.
Plays great. We want this.

LEAVE IT OUT!

Vs

JAK Will he get another
pasting from Ratchet?



PLATFORM WARS

RATCHET KILLS JAK!

THIRD GAMES GO HEAD TO HEAD AGAIN – OUR MONEY'S ON RATCHET!

THE THIRD instalment of the annual battle between *Ratchet & Clank* and *Jak and Daxter* has kicked off early this year. And the long-running feud between the two development teams looks like it'll get ugly after Sony – the publisher of both titles – chose to release a single screenshot of each game simultaneously, allowing neither game to steal an early advantage over its bitter rival.

Despite their near identical appearance, both games take a very different approach. Sources suggest that *Ratchet 3* will lurch toward the darkside, thanks to an influx of new programmers brought over from the *Legacy of Kain* design studios. Meanwhile *Jak III* is set to evolve into a much more open-ended affair, something PSW regards as a very bad idea given how unfocused and vague the last instalment was.

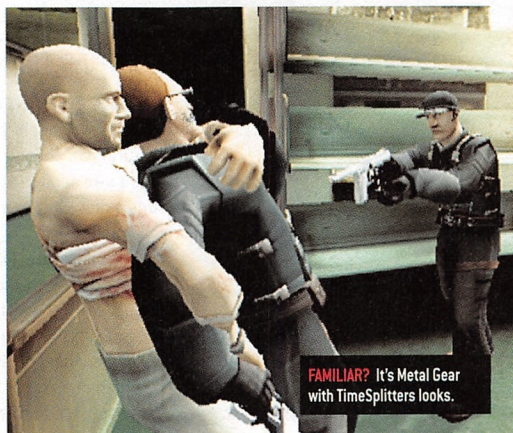
Last year the battle for supremacy was won (critically, at least) by *Ratchet & Clank 2*, although *Jak II* was the greater commercial success, outselling the the rodent and robot by a significant margin in pretty much every territory on the map. But PSW remains firmly in the *Ratchet* camp, and will bring you more pics and details in the coming months.

STEALTH

'SPLITTERS TEAM DOES METAL GEAR

FIRST GLIMPSE OF TOP SECRET FREE RADICAL GAME *SECOND SIGHT*.

FREE RADICAL – THE DEVELOPMENT TEAM BEHIND THE stunning *TimeSplitters* series – has steered violently away from the first-person shooting genre with its latest project, *Second Sight*. Described as an: "Immersive thriller with paranormal psychic abilities and stealthy exploration", *Second Sight* will put players in the role of John Vattic; an ESP-enhanced super soldier recovering from a failed special-forces mission in Siberia and slowly discovering the hideous truth behind his forgotten past. If games have taught us anything over the past few years, it's that the best way to go about unearthing government secrets is by sneaking around a lot, and snapping necks. Plenty of this is promised in *Second Scope*. But as interesting as it all sounds, PSW would much rather Free Radical spent all its time perfecting the potentially spectacular *TimeSplitters 3* – hopefully improving on the weak single-player game of *TS2*. More on this next month.



FAMILIAR? It's Metal Gear
with TimeSplitters looks.

GLOBAL INSIDER

EXTRA-LEAN, UNSALTED NEWS TRIMMINGS.



EYETOY GETS A KIND OF MAGIC

The upcoming game of *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* will feature minigames playable using *EyeToy*. Although most of the game will be in a traditional action and adventure style, four extra games will see players taking to the screen via the USB camera to slap chocolate frogs, play exploding snap, catch golden snitches and stop dungbombs exploding. You won't get an *EyeToy* bundled with the game, though. Shame that.

GRAND THEFT AUTO FOR PSP?

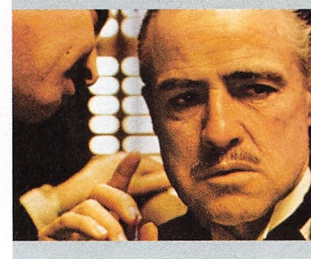
GTA and *Manhunt* publisher Take Two has confirmed it's developing games for Sony's PlayStation Portable. The games will be released at or around the launch of the new handheld console later this year. Could this mean there's already a handheld version of *Grand Theft Auto* in development right now? We wouldn't bet against it.

GAMETRAK GETS YOU MOVING

The latest wacky peripheral to bust into the crowded PS2 thing-a-mi-jig market is the Gametrak. It allows you to track the movement of objects in the real world and transfer the data of that movement into a game. Quite how it works we've no idea, but it basically means that anything can now be used as a controller. The first Gametrak release is *Black Wind* – the world's first first-person beat 'em up apparently, which tracks your hands as you punch. Hmmm. Who knows, it might just work.

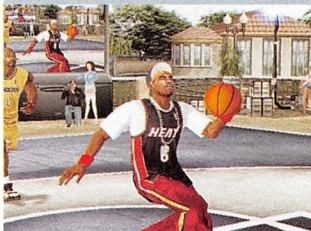
EA'S OFFER YOU CAN'T REFUSE

Wonders will never cease. Multi Oscar award-winning film *The Godfather*, of all things, is being made into a game by Electronic Arts. Widely perceived as a chance to get into *Grand Theft Auto* territory, the massive publisher has set itself a lofty goal, but if it's as good as the *Bond* and *Lord of the Rings* franchises, it might just work. Expect a ton of action-orientated set pieces, and with any luck a few top celebrity voiceovers too.



GLOBALINSIDER

HIGH-FIBRE, OMEGA 3-ENRICHED NEWS VITAMINS



HIGH BALLER

In a bid to dethrone *NBA Street Vol. 2* as the king of bling, Midway is using its mad skillz to make a basketball game so street, it lives in a young offenders institute. Based around the millionaire lifestyle of top NBA players, *NBA Ballers* asks you to train a rookie, win matches, get publicity and present your crib to the world as part of a TV show which chronicles your rise from hood hoodlum to hoop hero. Currently looking rather dandy, *NBA Ballers* will arrive in August.

SILENCE IS GOLDEN

EA has remained cagey about the new *Goldeneye* game for PS2, but has gone as far as confirming that it will be called *Goldeneye 2* rather than *Goldeneye*. Our sources tell us that the name change is due to newer Bond characters being included in the game as well as an expanded storyline. While online play has been confirmed we're still praying at the altar of EA and begging the super publisher to create a game at least half as good as the N64 version.

LOOK, NO HANDS!

Sony has unveiled further plans concerning PlayStation Portable. Apparently, it'll boast wireless multiplayer facilities so you can play against a mate without any cables, and it'll also connect directly to the PS2 and PSX in order to download game scores and upload games. More details next month.

CELL OUT SOON

Word reaches PSW that the delayed *Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow* has been put back because the core team have started work on the full and proper sequel – *Splinter Cell 2*, which is being considered by Ubisoft as a potential PlayStation3 release. Meanwhile, *Pandora Tomorrow* now looks likely to be released in June. The developer told PSW that it's just the online features that are being tweaked at present. Expect a full review next issue.



MUTANT Mutations have been exposed to a virus.



MEN IN BLACK Take the fight to the aliens.



HAVOC Destroy the top secret space base.



SQUAD You'll be joined by comrades.

LITTLE GREEN MEN

KILLZONE KILLER?

NEW FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER *AREA 51* DRAWS COMPARISONS WITH SONY'S MEGA BLASTER AS ALIEN CONSPIRACIES AND GOVERNMENT COVER-UPS AROUND.

AREA 51 IS MIDWAY'S STUNNING NEW first-person shooter revealed earlier this month. Set in the notorious US military base said to house extraterrestrial beings and UFOs, it looks like giving Sony's *Killzone* a serious run for its money later this year.

Squad-based shootouts in highly detailed environments feature heavily, and you can shoot up just about everything; sending chairs spinning or cans spewing out of vending machines in a neat display of physics.

The B-movie plot, which touches on the Roswell incident, is the framework for an orgy of violence that sees green alien blood splashed across the screen at every opportunity. In addition to a range of conventional weapons, your character is also endowed with a number of mutant and alien abilities that progress as you do. Midway is keeping tight-lipped on the exact nature of these abilities at present, but did reveal that a four-player split-screen and 16-player online mode are currently in the works.

What's certain is that *Area 51* looks the business. The facility has a creepy, sterile, industrial feel to it and is littered with evidence of bizarre experiments, including alien corpses in jars. Stan Winston Studios, which designed the monsters in *The Suffering*, is contributing some creatures of its own, including eight-eyed dog-things and the notorious black-eyed 'greys' that trailer-dwelling Americans swear beam them up on a regular basis. Stay tuned to PSW for future updates...



PERVERTED JUSTICE Deliver it with the meat grinder.



BAD TASTE No way. He wouldn't. It's just not his style.

VERY DISTURBED

HITMAN TO STIR UP CONTROVERSY AGAIN

THE ENVELOPE OF UTTER SICKNESS GETS PUSHED EVEN FURTHER THAN EVER BEFORE IN *HITMAN: CONTRACTS*.

HITMAN: CONTRACTS LOOKS SET

to whip up a media storm by featuring an obese character who's into sado-masochism and runs a disco inside a slaughterhouse.

This Jabba-like 'Meat King' and his equally disturbed brother, who struts around in his grubby pants wielding a bloodied meat cleaver, are holed up in a Romanian meat factory. Agent 47 is despatched to this den of evil to investigate the kidnapping of a

young girl, where he finds a victim hanging from a meat hook...

Luckily, you'll be able to use these hooks to give the villains a taste of their own medicine, or to hook them in the nether regions before dumping them into an industrial meat-grinder. It's all even more twisted than the usual cold-blooded *Hitman* killings, and we're sure it will stir up the usual publicity associated with attention-grabbing games. The difference here is that *Hitman: Contracts* should actually be worth playing. More very soon.



FOOTBALL CRAZY

BALLS TO THE LOT OF YA!

IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR AGAIN. THE time when a mass of football games roll out just before a huge tournament.

The competition in question is Euro 2004 of course - which, for those of you out of the loop, is Europe's biggest soccer event next to... well... pretty much every other soccer event they have over there. Given that Australia isn't involved by definition, we can't really say we care who wins... just as long as the poms don't.

UEFA EURO 2004 is, typically, EA's officially licensed game of the tournament that boasts all the official squads, strips, stadiums, player names and so on. Besides being able to play as any of the 16 competing nations, you can go right back to qualifying or the dreaded play-offs, or even just arrange a friendly with one of 35 further countries (i.e. Australia) that didn't make it. Anyone up for kicking



HOORAY HENRY Thierry will take some stopping this year.

England's arse again?

There's a strong case for arguing that this is just **FIFA 2004** repackaged, but there is at least one new feature added since that game: every player's morale is based on their own performance and that of the team, which in turn affects their abilities on the pitch. **UEFA EURO 2004** arrives on European shores in June and we're not entirely sure if it's actually going to come out here yet. It probably will. **FIFA** sold pretty well, didn't it?



LINE UP Look, it's the bit you always click through.



MAKE MINE A BECKS Beckham actually dribbles past a player.

And on the 7th day he didn't rest,

Join **SWAPZONE** now and get 3 months membership absolutely **FREE**

but went forth to SWAPZONE and got a new game.

SwapZone™ is the premiere Australian and New Zealand computer and video game trading site where members can trade their original games with each other. **Join now and get some new games.**

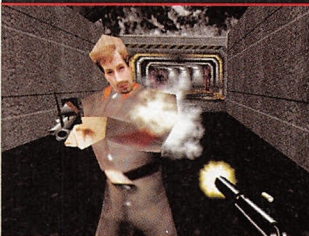


www.swapzone.com.au
www.swapzone.co.nz

go forth and swap



PSW'S 10 MOST WANTED



1 GOLDENEYE 2

Bond is, well, not back at all. Instead you play a rogue agent who's teamed up with Goldfinger after being fired from M16. Intriguing to say the least, especially if they can work the classic "No, Mr Bond. I expect you to die", line in there somewhere.

2 GTA: SAN ANDREAS

It's got an official title, a release date (October 22) and everything! Now it's just a question of whether it'll be set in the swinging '60s or the flares-and-disco obsessed '70s. We're rooting for the '70s for some *French Connection*-style car chases.

3 SINGSTAR

It's almost here. We'll finally get to know what the hell Justin Hawkins is singing in the high-pitched chorus of 'I Believe in a Thing Called Love'.

4 KILLZONE

As if you didn't already know, *Killzone* is the life-giving elixir that tastes like sweet nectar. Drink up now.

5 METAL GEAR SOLID 3: SNAKE EATER

Our interest was beginning to wane to be honest, but this month's new screens have our full, wide-eyed attention once again.

6 SECOND SIGHT

The *TimeSplitters* team sticks two fingers up at Solid Snake with this *Metal Gear Solid*-esque sneak 'em up that'll be ready well before *Sneak Eater* chows down.

7 SHELLSHOCK: NAM '67

Described as 'graphically harrowing', we can imagine playing this with Barber's 'Adagio For Strings' belting out in the background while quoting *Full Metal Jacket*. Me so horny.

8 BURNOUT 3

To paraphrase Alan Partridge: "Crash, bang, wallop! What a video game!" Check out the DVD or our massive feature if you don't believe us.

9 DRIV3R

It's just under two months away and for once you can believe the hype.

10 MORTAL KOMBAT: DECEPTION

Fights that take place on multiple levels, new moves, suicide Fatalities, a massive roster of old and new characters, plus adventuring and chess! Oh yes, bring it on!

READY TO ROCK

IT'S OFFICIAL! GTA: SAN ANDREAS

ROCKSTAR FINALLY COMES CLEAN ABOUT WHERE THE NEXT *GTA* WILL BE SET.

AFTER REGISTERING A RIDICULOUS NUMBER OF NAMES

with the US Patents office for copyright purposes last month, Rockstar has revealed that San Andreas is to be the location of the next *GTA*. Not Las Vegas, Los Angeles or Tokyo, but San Andreas, the setting of the original *GTA*. Loosely based around the West Coast cities of San Francisco and Los Angeles, *GTA: San Andreas* will embrace Californian hippy ideals (Sean Ryder is doing some voice acting) and the edgy gangsta-filled projects of Los Angeles. Expect more action, a larger map to explore and more modern forms of transport. *GTA: San Andreas* has also been confirmed as PS2 exclusive and will arrive on October 22, just days after it arrives in American shops. Listen closely and you can hear the screams of a thousand Xbox owners. They'll have to wait at least a year before experiencing what could well be the best gangster game ever.

Our source has excitedly blabbed snippets of information that speak of online compatibility. Visit an airport, get in a plane and you can socialise with wannabe criminals all over the internet in an open plan world featuring REAL people. At least that's what

our source revealed when we threatened him with the electrical testicle clamp and told him to spill or be killed. Further rumours suggest that massive *True Crime* style freeways will be included for racing mini games and police bikes are expected

to appear alongside new vehicles, so you won't be able to grab a scooter and outwit the police by simply speeding down an alleyway. Rockstar is also likely to respond to illegal internet hacked versions of *GTA* (head to www.GTAforums.com) by adding a stunt creator mode, plus the ability to create characters in a style similar to the mode seen in *The Sims Bustin' Out*. Hacked versions of *GTA: Vice City* on the internet feature everything from Britney Spears to Bin Laden and a selection of licensed vehicles from *Gran Turismo 3*. Some fans are even test-driving Toyota Supras around a map that's been designed by a fan eager to offer his artist's impression of *San Andreas* long before the official game hits the shops.

Rockstar North head honcho Leslie Benzie says his team are going all out to make *GTA: San Andreas* so good, it will make you cry: "We are extremely humbled by the success of the *Grand Theft Auto* series, and it has made us push ourselves further than ever." How much further? Read our exclusive feature next month!



THE NEW WAVE

GTA: SAN ANDREAS IS HEADING BACK TO CONTEMPORARY MUSIC ACTS WITH A ROCK AND RAP ROSTER OF STARS.



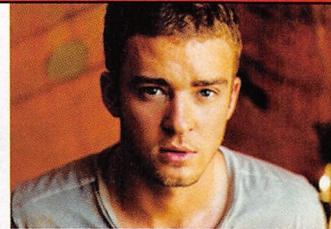
50 CENT

As far back as 2000 when *GTA3* was in production, Rockstar hooked up with a small New York rap label created by a DJ to hype new acts in need of exposure. Since the release of *GTA: Vice City*, the same label gave birth to 50 Cent and in turn, created the fastest-selling debut album ever in *Get Rich or Die Trying*. Expect *In Da Club* to be major rap anthem in *GTA: San Andreas*.



THE HAPPY MONDAYS

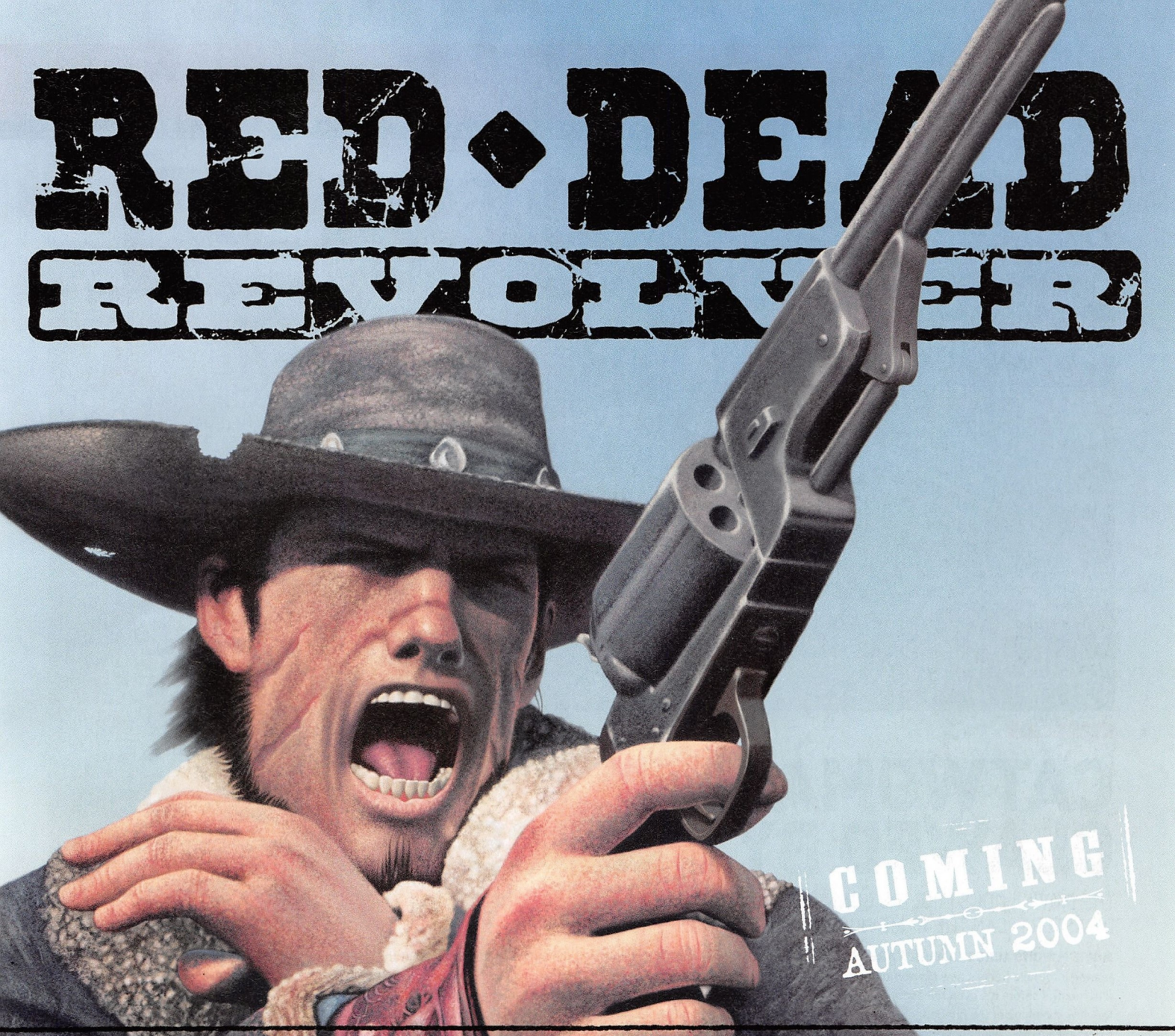
When you were a baby, Manchester was cool. So were baggy jeans, unwashed hair and drugs. The Manchester-based Happy Mondays had all of these things. With dizzy frontman Sean Ryder at the helm, they created the classic *Pills*, *Thrills* and *Bellyaches* album. Ryder is currently signed to do voice acting but expect to hear the Mondays on the *GTA* airwaves too.



JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE

Face it, by the time *GTA: San Andreas* comes out, Jacko will be in jail and Rockstar won't touch him with an antiseptic cattle prod. Enter the younger, hipper and altogether more legal Jacko 2.0. No pop radio station would be complete without the new prince of pop and Rockstar will lap up the beatboxing skinhead faster than you can say, "I'm Lovin' It".

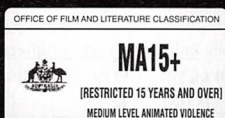
RED • DEAD REVOLVER



COMING
AUTUMN 2004



 WWW.ROCKSTARGAMES.COM/REDDEADREVOLVER 



PlayStation®2



"PlayStation" and the "PS" Family logo are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Microsoft, Xbox, and the Xbox logos are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the U.S. and/or other countries and are used under license from Microsoft. © 2004 Rockstar Games, Inc. Rockstar Games, Rockstar San Diego and the R logo, are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of Take-Two Interactive Software, Inc. Red Dead Revolver is a trademark of Angel Studios, Inc. (d/b/a Rockstar San Diego). All other marks and trademarks are properties of their respective owners. All rights reserved.



HALLE'S BERRIES

CATWOMAN CLAWED BY CRITICS

THE MOVIE LOOKS LIKE IT'S GONNA BE AN UNMITIGATED DISASTER – CAN THE GAME HOPE TO FARE ANY BETTER?

MOVIE PUNDITS ACROSS AMERICA ARE tearing into Halle Berry's new *Catwoman* film months before it's even released. Preview showings of the big-budget movie have taken a massive hammering from critics, with Oscar winner Berry singled out for special attention. All of which has serious repercussions for the PS2 game,

due to coincide with the film's release here later this year.

The first handful of screenshots from the upcoming EA game have leaked out, ably demonstrating the acrobatic feline fighting skills that allow her to evade enemy bullets and... erm... look all hot and stuff. But will the game be able to deflect

the torrent of abuse aimed at the upcoming movie? We've seen the game up and running, and while it shows commendable attention to detail (the feline animation in particular) PSW fears that mediocrity is the best it can hope for. Which, by all accounts, will be a huge improvement on the film.

FELINE SAUCY Halle's gymnastics always mesmerise us.



GET BUSTED

NARC IN DRUG ABUSE SHAME

ARCADE REMAKE SENDS OUT THE WRONG DRUGS MESSAGE.

THE LATEST GAME TO ATTEMPT TO RAISE ITS PROFILE BY deliberately courting controversy is Midway's *NARC*. Taking its cue from the good cop/bad cop feature in *True Crime: Streets of LA*, players are given the moral choice as to whether to play it straight as a member of the elite NARC squad, or take the bad cop route and **"abuse narcotics to gain that extra edge"**. Playing as dual characters Jack Forzenski and Marcus Hill, players decide whether to turn drugs into evidence, or – incredibly – use and sell them on the street for enhanced powers and extra cash. **Smoking illegal marijuana** slows down time, giving players extra seconds to aim and shoot, while **imbibing illegal amphetamines** gives characters an extra burst of 'speed' to evade gunfire. The message it sends out is clear: taking drugs makes you stronger, and quicker. It's this kind of self-defeating shock tactic that has gaming scapegoated for all of society's current ills.

R.I.P.
XBOX2



MICRO MOURNING

XBOX 2 DOOMED

EXPERTS BACK PS3 TO WIN NEW CONSOLE WAR.

VIDEO GAMES ANALYSTS ARE predicting that Sony is going to win the next 'next generation' console race by a massive margin. The Informa Media Group has forecast that Sony will have amassed a staggering 32 million sales of PlayStation3 in PAL territories by the year 2010, compared to a paltry 10 million Xbox2s and an embarrassing five million sales of whatever Nintendo's next machine will be called.

The news of Sony's continued domination is another devastating blow to Bill Gates' company that was sent reeling earlier this month when a leaked internet document confirmed the awesome power of the PlayStation3 machine. Reportedly running at 4Ghz, some 13 times faster than the PS2, the report predicts a theoretical maximum of 1billion polygons per second, and a practical maximum of 200 million polygons a second. A top-spec PS2 game uses less than 10 million polygons per second. In reality that could mean up to 120 cars on-screen at once in *Gran Turismo 5* – it's truly mind-boggling.

Still, these numerical comparisons can be misleading; it's not just about how many polygons are drawn but also what effects can be applied to them. Current PS2 technology struggles with a single layer of effects; the PlayStation3, however, will be able to add up to 16 layers of effects without any drop in performance.

This all adds up to one massively powerful piece of kit, far in excess of even today's most powerful PCs. Rest assured PSW will be first with the details when they emerge.

GLOBAL INSIDER

**TINY, ITTY BITTY NEWS
GEMS FOR WEE BABIES
AND PIXIE FOLK.**



BLUE IS THE COLOUR

Sony has seen fit to unleash an aqua-coloured PlayStation2 on the world. Having now sold over a million PS2s in this country and several kajillions everywhere else, we're wondering who exactly Sony hopes to sell this machine to. Surely the three or so luddites who don't actually own PS2s aren't going to be swayed by sapphire...?

'DROME IS WHERE THE HEART IS

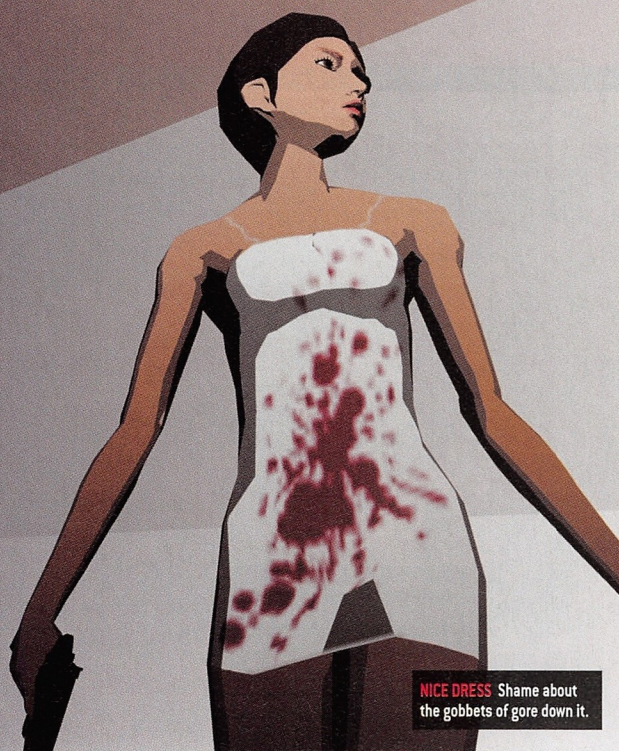
Powerdrome is a remake of an old, nay ancient 80s racing title that has you zoomin' around 24 circuits in your traditional future high-speed environment. The game will feature online play and be out in April. We've kind of fallen out of love with the whole future racing genre of late. Could *Powerdrome* be the one to rekindle the spark?

EA GETS MARVEL-OUS DEAL

Marvel and Electronic Arts have teamed up to use Marvel characters in EA games. EA will also be coming up with original heroes which will star in Marvel comics of their own. Everything but the *Hulk* and *Punisher* will be absorbed into EA's gigantic web of money, presumably because those two characters have already been signed up due to their respective films. It's what we call 'synergy', folks.

YOU DON'T KNOW JACK

Samurai Jack fans should cheer the news that the cartoon series is coming to PlayStation2 this year. The game will be an easy-to-play action affair aimed at the kiddier end of the fan spectrum, but at least the whole of the creative team involved with the cartoon has supplied voice, design and story elements to make everything official. *Samurai Jack: The Shadow of Aku* is out now is out now in the US, so expect it to reach these shores in May.



NICE DRESS Shame about the gobbets of gore down it.

LUCKY 7

KILLER 7 BREAKS OUT

GAMECUBE WEIRDNESS INFECTS PS2 AND TURNS A FRAIL PENSIONER INTO HARDMAN.

KILLER 7 IS THE VERY JAPANESE AND quite, quite mad new game from veteran developers Capcom. It could just as easily be the name of a dramatic SBS series or perhaps the name of a *Star Trek* space ship but the truth is far more sinister. You will play the part of the world's most feared killer, 65 year-old handicapped man, Harman Smith. Gameplay details are

confusing at best but *Killer 7* will apparently involve wheelchairs and, of course, guns — lots of guns. Schizophrenic murderer Harman has seven personalities, which give him different attributes and abilities. Capcom are keeping these talents under wraps for now, but you'll be able to switch between them to complete set tasks.

Killer 7 has a bizarre yet beautiful cell shaded appearance, seemingly taking the cartoon look into the realm of the graphic novel just like recent shooter *XIII*. Flat colours and a subdued palette give the game a completely individual look and presuming that the game can actually make gameplay sense, *Killer 7* could be the most original thing on PS2 this year.

FATALITY!

KOMBAT'S BACK

MORTAL KOMBAT: DECEPTION LINES UP FOR ANOTHER SCRAP, PENSION BOOK IN HAND

HEAVYWEIGHT FIGHTER MORTAL KOMBAT IS MAKING ITS

return. *Mortal Kombat: Deception*, the sixth game in the series, is certain to be faster and, we have learned, far bloodier than ever before. The *Mortal Kombat* series' reputation for uber violence and bloodshed should mean that we see a truly shocking display of hard core filth when it shuffles out onto your PS2 along with an entourage of TV adverts and, inevitably, outraged newspaper editorials.

Much is being made of the nnew finishing move fatalities, with Midway keen to reveal them one by one, like tantalising strips of bacon strapped to Kylie's ass while she hovers above a sea of piranhas. We'll be seeing many of the old faces making a return with Baraka a cast iron certainty, as his grinning visage beaming out from this early screen shows. Expect *Mortal Kombat: Deception* to arrive in September.



MAKE IT STOP! He's actually saying, "End my pain!"

GLOBAL EXTRA >>

ALL THE LATEST ON THE BIGGEST PLAYSTATION2 GAMES ON YOUR SHORT-RANGE RADAR.

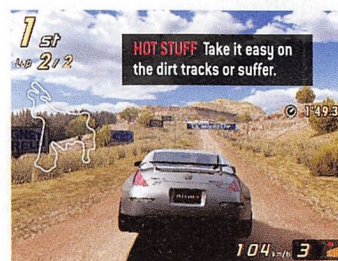


BRAVISSIMO The Nismo 350's just a Nissan. Only more so.



GET IN LINE They still take the racing line, naturally.

GRAN TURISMO 4



HOT STUFF Take it easy on the dirt tracks or suffer.

GRAN TURISMO 4'S RELEASE DATE HAS JUST BEEN PUT BACK TO LATER THIS YEAR. YEAH, YOU READ THAT RIGHT. WE'RE GRINDING OUR TEETH TOO.

> PUBLISHER SONY
> GENRE DRIVING
> OUT SEPTEMBER

EVERY MONTH WE EDGE THAT LITTLE BIT CLOSER TO the king of all driving games. Well, every month except this month when it puts its foot down and pulls away a little. In other words the thrill of being able to drive all manner of cars round all manner of courses like a lunatic is sadly going to have to wait, because the release date for *Gran Turismo 4* has been put back. Sony has shifted the PAL release date till September in order to give developer Polyphony time to do something really special. Quite what, nobody yet knows though.

However, we would hazard a guess that it involves making all the beautiful cars and stunning tracks even more beautiful and/or stunning. It was almost certainly looking at these beautiful/stunning new screens that swung it. Other than that we'd say that it was something to do with sorting out the online aspects of the god-like title so that aspiring racing drivers can duke it out online.

But in the meantime, here's some bumper-to-bumper racing action for your delectation, in full moving image technicolour. It's lovely to see the game running as smooth as silk with all these cars on screen. It actually brought a tear to our tired eyes. Relocate your cynical peepers towards this month's cover DVD and see the action for yourself if you don't believe us.

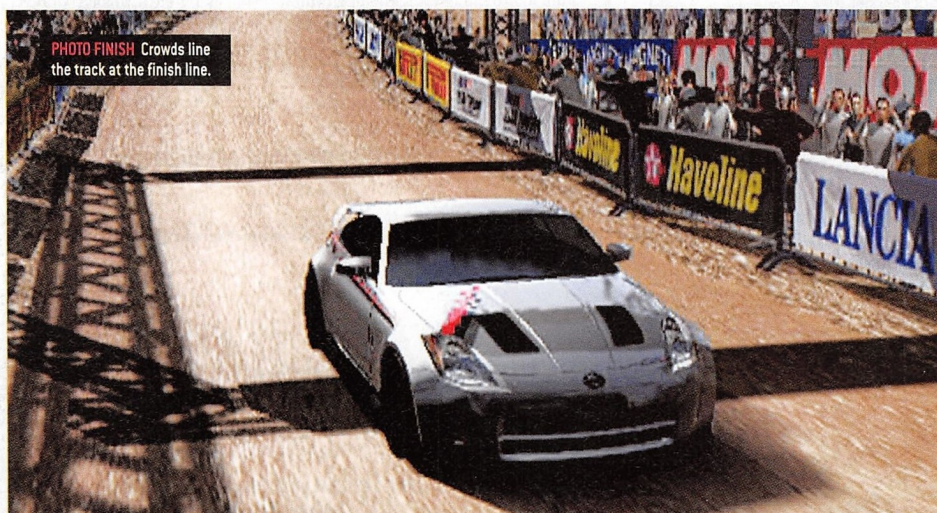
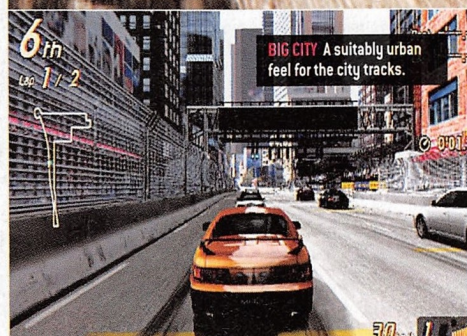


PHOTO FINISH Crowds line the track at the finish line.



BIG CITY A suitably urban feel for the city tracks.

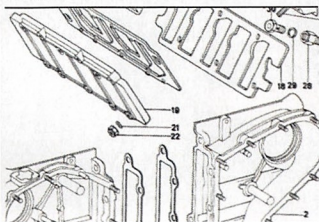


LOOKING GOOD Cars just dazzle the naked eye.



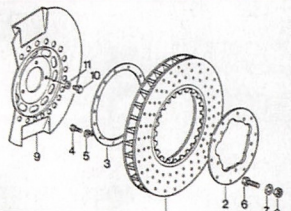
JOIN THE MOD SQUAD

CHANGES TO YOUR MOTOR WILL MAKE MORE OF A DIFFERENCE NOW. HERE'S PSW'S QUICK GUIDE TO MODIFICATION.



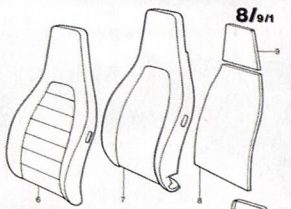
ENGINE

You want to go faster? Of course you do. By fitting turbos, camshafts, and widening pistons you can make your car more powerful and hence get it round the track that little bit faster.



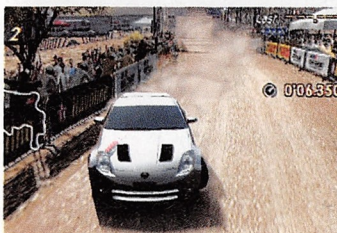
BRAKES

Going quickly is fine, but to get round a track in the shortest possible time stopping is just as important. Bigger brake discs will stop your car more quickly and make your lap times faster.



WEIGHT

A light car will go faster and stop quicker, so one of the first things to do is to ditch all the heavy equipment and get down to basics inside. Very simple, and makes your car much faster too.



FIRST HOME Kicking up dust in the finishing straight.

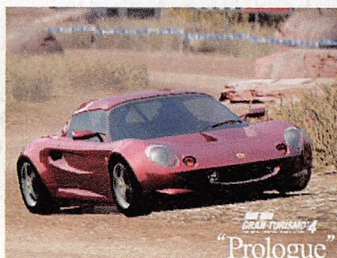
THE COLOR PURPLE The Lotus Elise 190E. In purple.



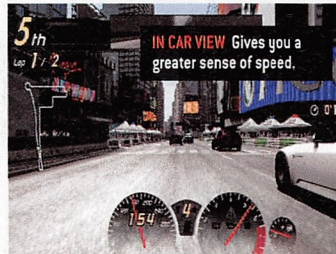
IMPREZZA A classic dirt racer souped-up for the road.



AIR-CON Plenty of air intakes keep the engine cool.



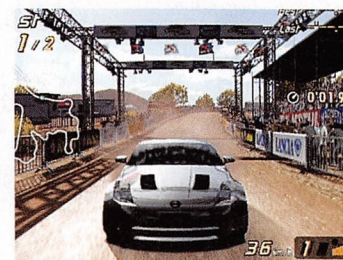
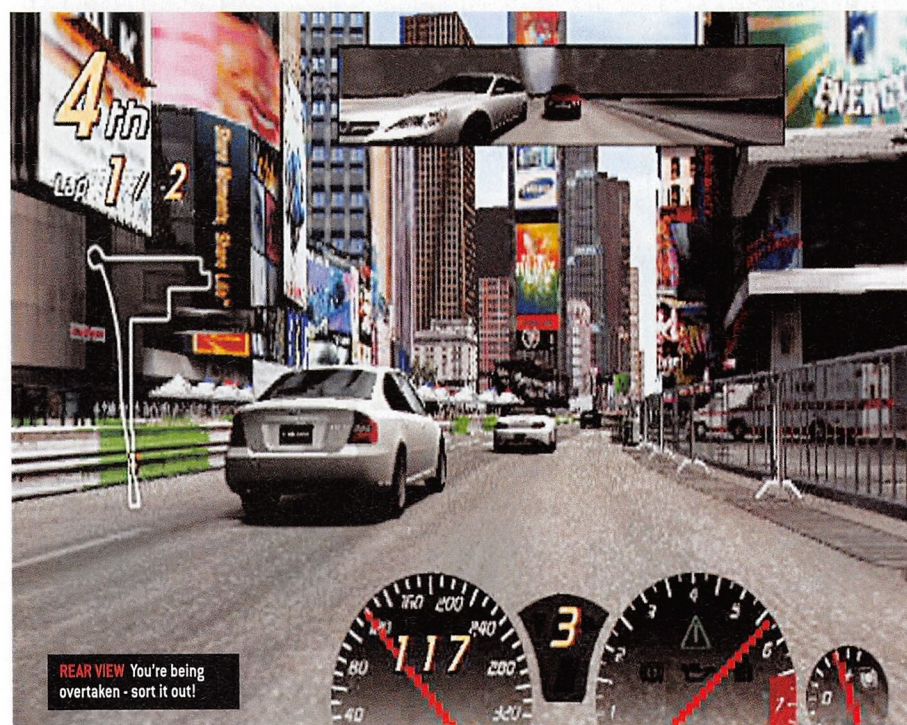
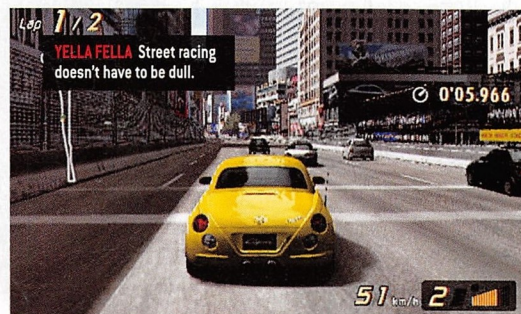
PURPLE It's our old mate, the Lotus Elise 190E again.



DRIVE ME The Mitsubishi Evo. Yes please.

PILE UP Don't get caught out at the back of the field.





DUST BUNNY Rallying's as fun as ever. More so, even.





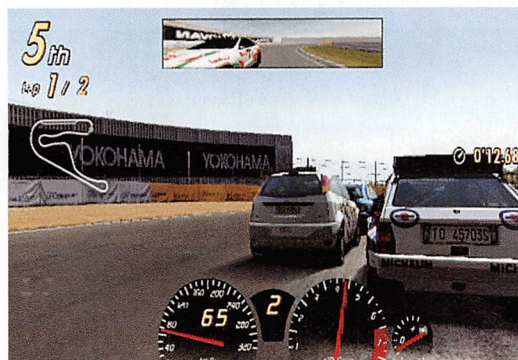
FAST TRACK Test the mettle of your motor on various troublesome racing courses.



DON'T LOOK BACK But will rallying end up as comparatively easy as it did in GT3?



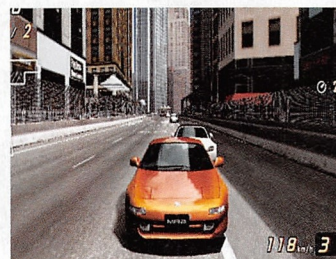
SMALL STUFF Nippy superminis for dodging bends.



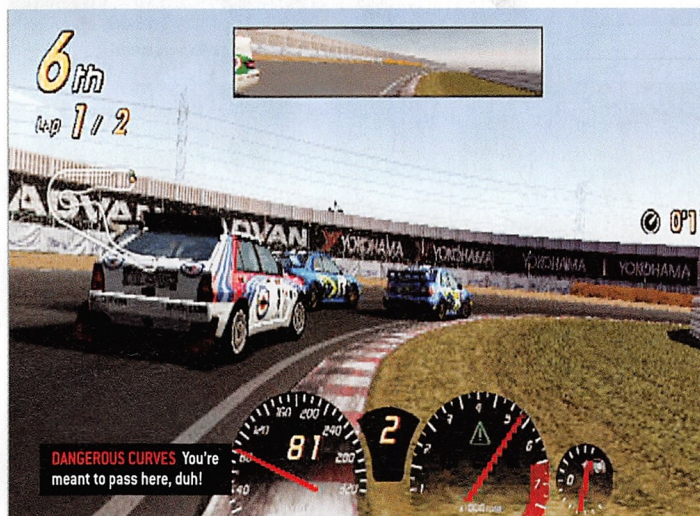
GET IN THERE Just like every other GT game, you'll have to battle for first place.



IN A SPIN You know what happens if you take corners too quickly. So stay cool.



YOU SHALL NOT PASS This MR2 ain't gonna budge.



DANGEROUS CURVES You're meant to pass here, duh!



YELLOW PERIL But nary a scratch on either of 'em.

THE REAL DRIVING SIMULATOR?

PSW TAKES A LOOK AT THE SHINY REAL LIFE VERSIONS OF SOME OF *GRAN TURISMO 4*'S ROCKET-PROPELLED MONSTERS.



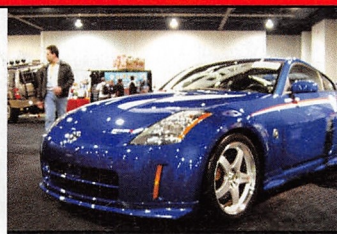
>> TRD TOYOTA CELICA

Toyota's own racing department's upgraded Celica. Designed for track use. Driven by utterly smug rich bastards we'd imagine.



>> FIGHTEX MITSUBISHI LANCER VII

A US independent upgrade. Designed for the racing track rather than the usual rally courses. Hence the slick style.



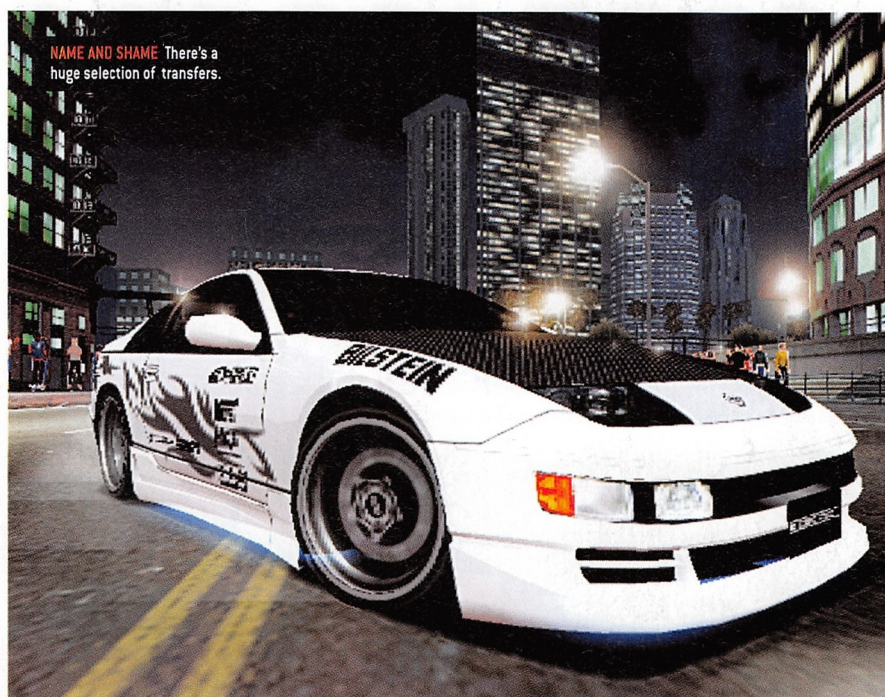
>> NISMO 350 ZX

A lightly-tuned convertible from Nissan's own racing team. A refinement rather than a monster, but scary all the same.



>> RALLIART MITSUBISHI LANCER EVO VII

The official rally-tune car from Mitsubishi, this is the same car driven by rallying's heroes. It doesn't get any better.



NAME AND SHAME There's a huge selection of transfers.



MY EYES! The colours can be truly retina-burning.



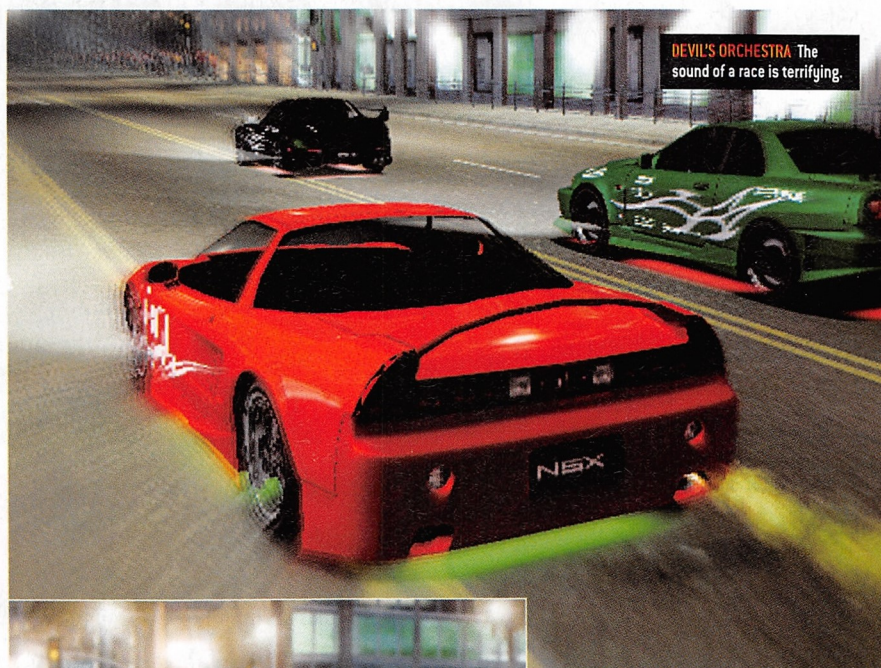
SKYLINE Take an already mental car and make it even more mental.

JUICED

ANOTHER GLANCE IN THE DIRECTION OF THE CAR MODDER'S DREAM RACER.

> PUBLISHER ACCLAIM
> GENRE DRIVING
> OUT SEPTEMBER

BILLED AS A DREAM COME TRUE FOR CAR MODIFICATION nuts, urban street racers and suburban petrolheads everywhere, *Juiced* has wheelspun its way back onto the Global Extra radar with some shiny new screens. Boasting a near infinite choice of colour and customisation options, *Juiced* will finally give us the unique online presence we've always craved. Then there's the variety of routes on offer, from broad city boulevards to tight winding costal tracks via mountain passes and dedicated racing circuits. It'll be like having *Need For Speed Underground*, *Burnout* and *Ridge Racer* all running on your PS2 at once. On top of that there's a huge range of licensed vehicles to choose from, all gorgeously rendered and fully customisable. The sooner we get our hands on the finished game the better. September has never seemed so far away. Right then, we're off to lower the suspension on our Vauxhall Vectras, and maybe fit some halogen lamps.



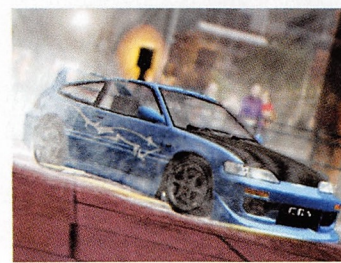
DEVIL'S ORCHESTRA The sound of a race is terrifying.



CROWD PLEASER Onlookers cheer your wild efforts to finish first.



AIR DAM EXTREME Some of the tuning parts are truly extreme.



SHOPPING NINJA Ordinary car turned into a beast.



PRELUDE TO SPEED Carbon fibre and plastic madness.



SEDAN FOR ALL SEASONS

WEATHER EFFECTS WILL HELP TO MAKE DRIVING AROUND THE JUICED UNIVERSE A MORE DIVERSE AND DEMANDING EXPERIENCE.



RAIN The wet tracks are the most demanding, requiring full concentration and delicate steering.



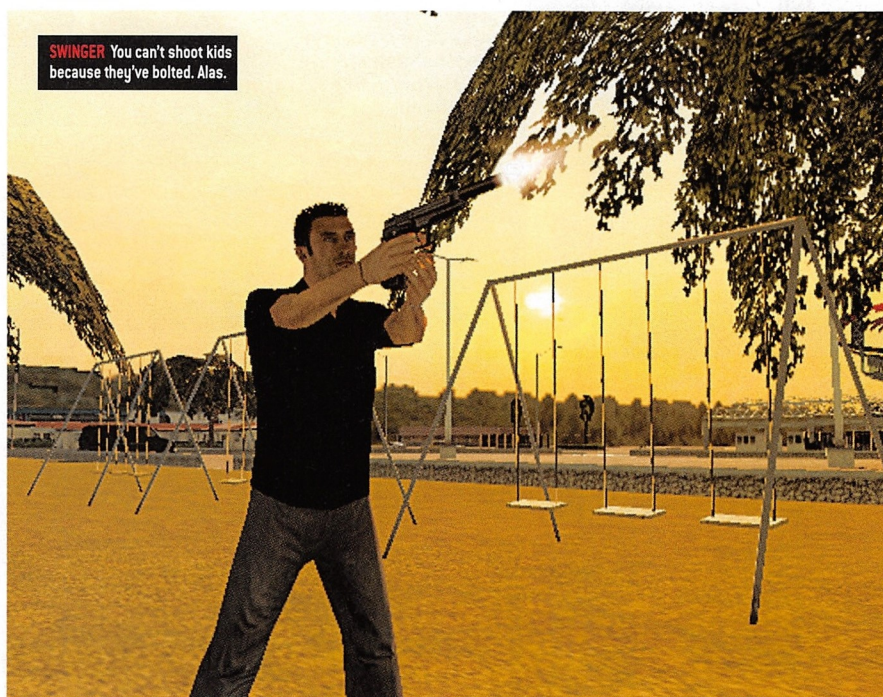
SUNSHINE The easiest racing conditions. Plus it makes your car look nice and shiny.



OVERCAST Decent racing conditions but a full torrential downpour could be just around the corner.



NIGHT The traditional home of the modding scene – expect to see plenty of neon lighting.



MIAMI VICE When you're not driving, you're shooting.



MIAMI NICE Shooting at everyone and everything. You bad man.

DRIV3R



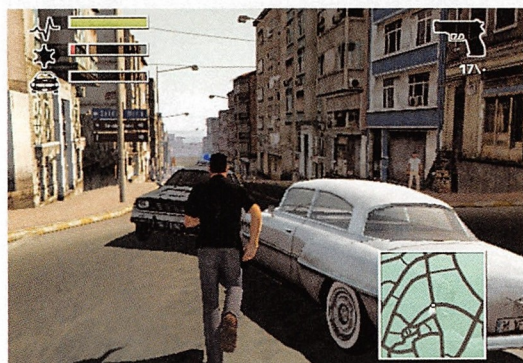
ALL GOOD THINGS COME TO HE WHO WAITS.
SHAME WE HAVE TO WAIT A BIT LONGER THEN.

> PUBLISHER ATARI
> GENRE ACTION
> OUT JUNE

DELAYS, DELAYS, DELAYS. YOU'VE ONLY JUST RECOVERED

from the horror of the *Gran Turismo 4* postponement and up sneaks another setback. The March date initially mooted for the release of *Driv3r* has now been pushed back until June. On the upside though, developer Reflections has poured masses of extra tech help into the project to ensure it meets its new release date and to make ensure that it also meets the sky-high expectations held for it by one and all.

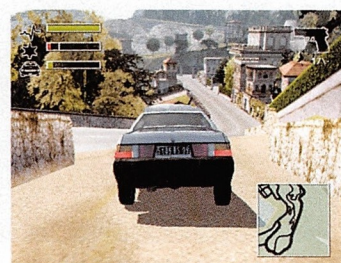
Still, delays or not, *Driv3r* is shaping up to present something pretty damn special as these rather wonderful screenshots amply demonstrate. Frankly, we are so excited about getting into Tanner's shoes and fiddling with his laces, we've completely forgotten about driving around in these beautiful cars, round these stupendously gorgeous streets and then breaking everything, just for kicks. See what we mean on this month's DVD.



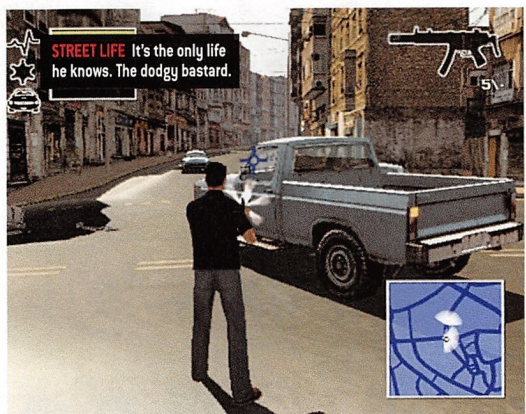
RUNNING MAN But does he look like he's pooped? See the DVD.



SISTERS OF MERCEDES The cars aren't licenced but they are recognisable.



TRADE IN Time for a swift car change, we think.



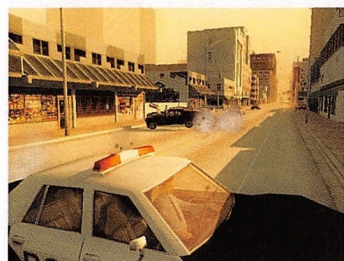
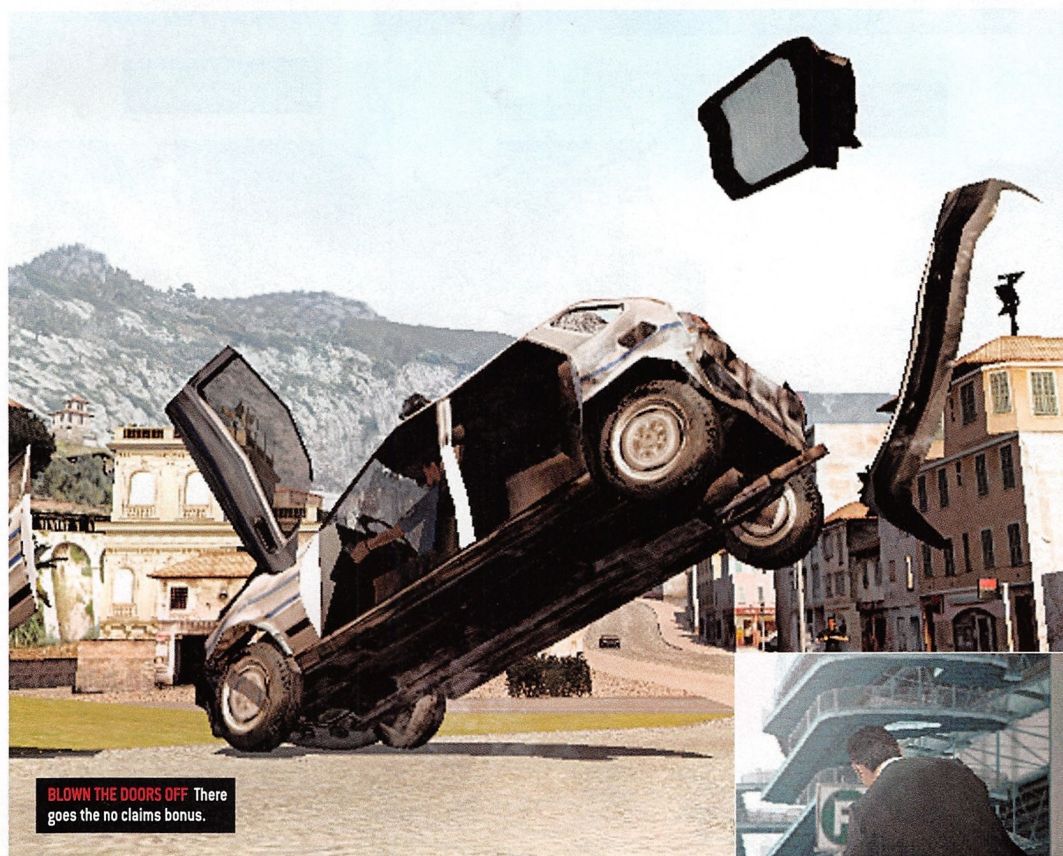
BUS-TED Smack up all kinds of vehicles.



BANG BANG, HE SHOT ME The explosions are great.



FILM NOIR Everything looks like it's from a movie.



PLEASE POLICE ME Expect to tangle with the cops.



NO CLAIMS BONUS Damage modelling is great.



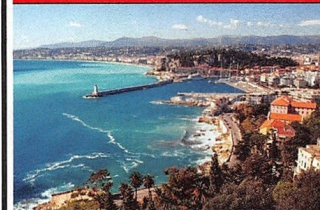
DRIV3R WORLD TOUR

PSW TAKES YOU ON A WHISTLESTOP TOUR OF THE THREE CITIES YOU'LL BE SMASHING UP IN DRIV3R.



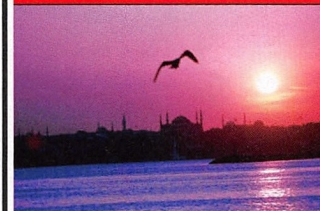
MIAMI

Has the highest population of models in the world. Widely credited as the inspiration for the look and feel of *Vice City*, so expect plenty of comparisons.



NICE

Located in the south of France, this beautiful coastal town contains large numbers of French people and as such is best avoided.



ISTANBUL

Capital of Turkey and the location of choice for English football fans wishing to be stabbed, or have bottles/tables/chairs hurled at them.



HILLBILLY It's not all sports cars in the *Driv3r* world.



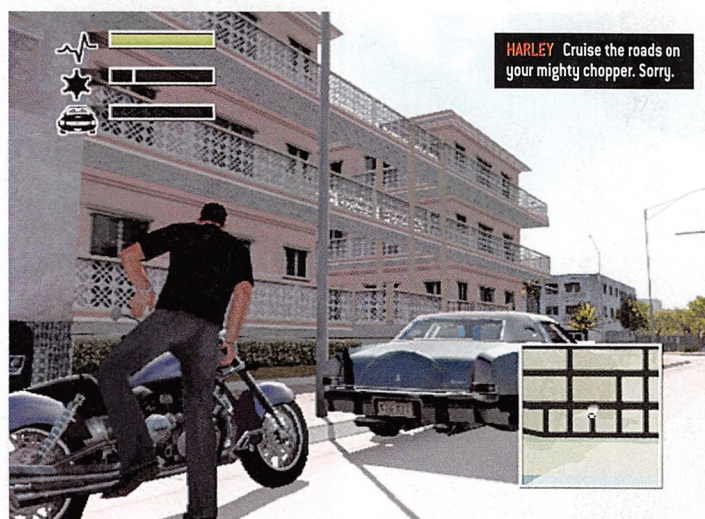
RUB HER Go through lots and lots of tires.



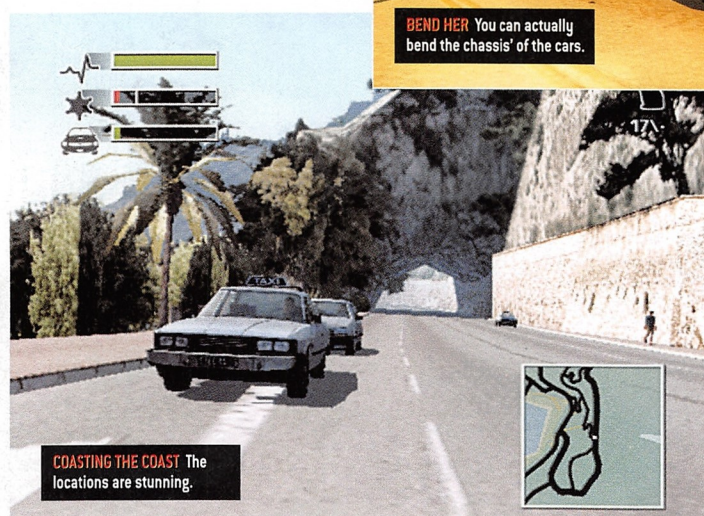
CRUNCH TIME Accidents are astonishingly detailed.



BEND HER You can actually bend the chassis' of the cars.



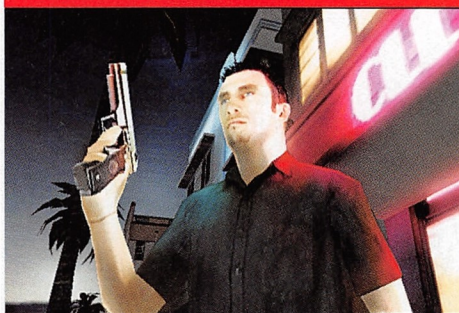
HARLEY Cruise the roads on your mighty chopper. Sorry.



COASTING THE COAST The locations are stunning.

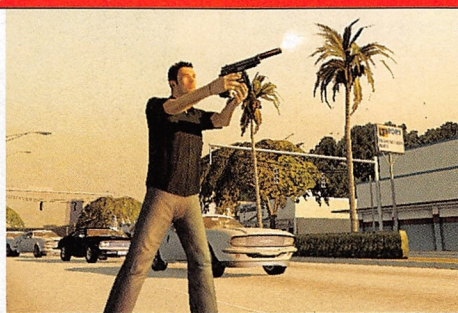
THE WAY OF THE GUN

TANNER'S PACKING HEAT. HERE'S THE FIRST CLOSE-UPS OF HIS GEAR.



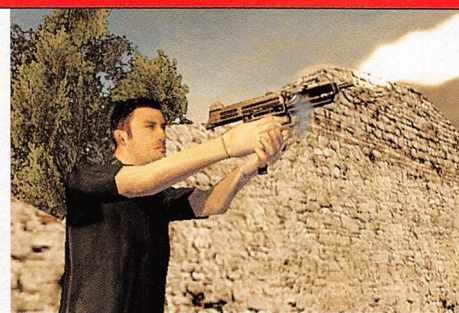
>> PISTOL

Tanner strolling out of a club with a loaded pistol. As you do. Aside from settling disputes about pint-spilling and my-bird-looking-at, it's a great lightweight firearm.



>> SILENCED PISTOL

The silenced pistol can be used in stealthy situations to keep everything quiet. Slightly negated here by the fact that he's firing it in the middle of a crowded road.



>> MP5

But for all the meaty, car-mashing firefights that we're looking forward to, it's got to be the MP5. A proper automatic weapon for a proper criminal. Uh, undercover cop. Sorry.

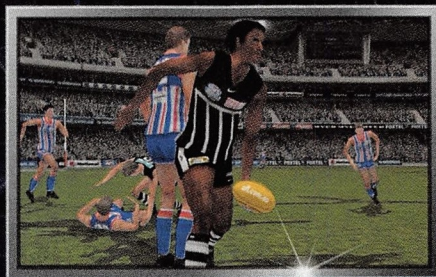
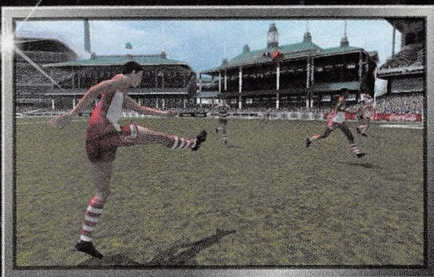
NOT A SPECTATOR SPORT



LIVE

PREMIERSHIP EDITION

Out April 2004.



Get amongst the action with AFL Live Premiership Edition. Play for your favourite team and guide them to Grand Final victory. Can you win the Brownlow? Or kick a winning goal after the siren? Out April 2004, it's time to play hard.

All new features:

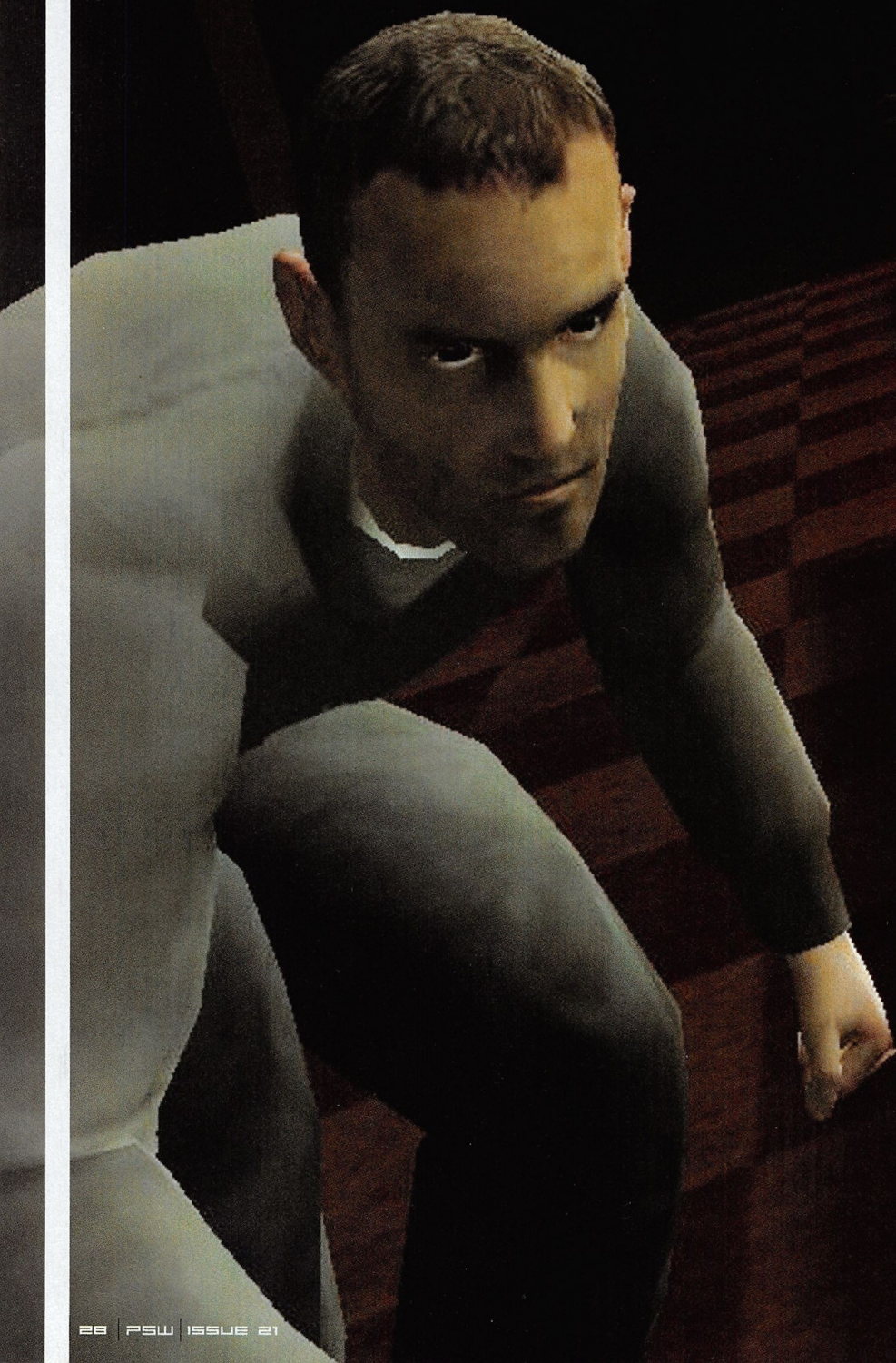
- ENHANCED GAMEPLAY
- UPDATED STADIUMS
- 2004 TEAM LISTS & ALL AUSTRALIAN TEAM
- PLAYSTATION®2 MULTITAP SUPPORT
- UNLOCKABLE VIDEO CONTENT
- HERITAGE OR PRE-SEASON GUERNSEYS

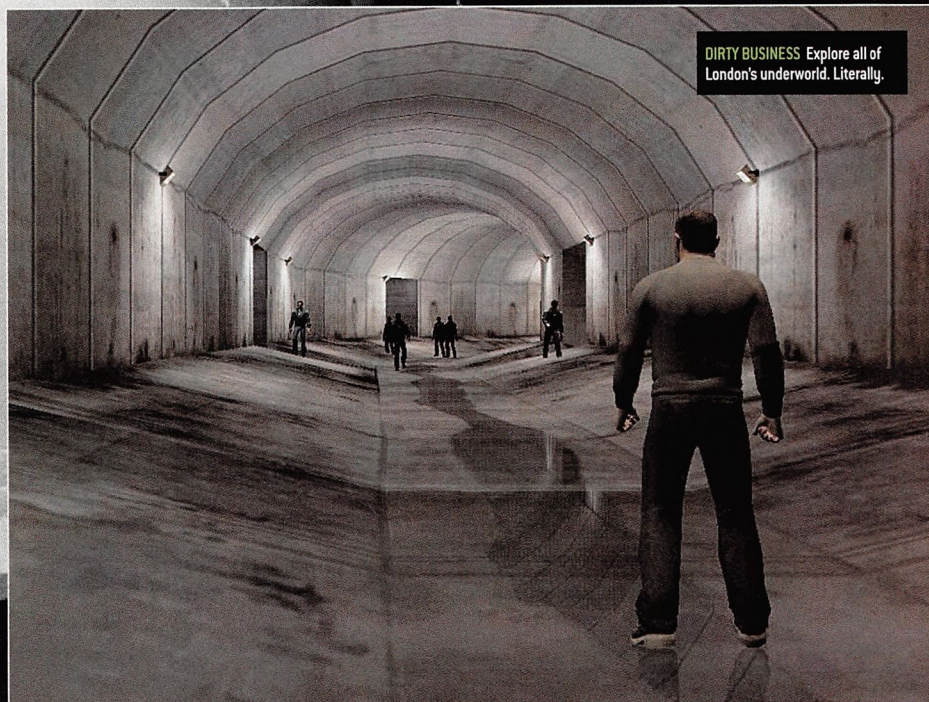
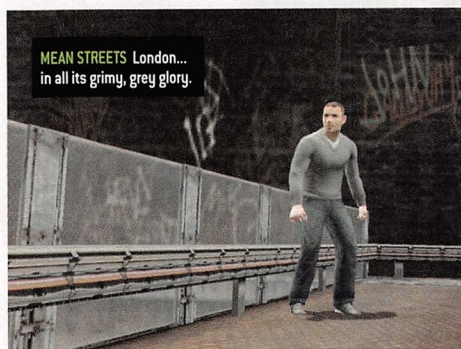
ACC0212



YOU AINT 'EARD NUFFINK, RIGHT?

THE TEAM BEHIND *THE GETAWAY 2* DIDN'T WANT TO NARK ABOUT THEIR UPCOMING SEQUEL. BUT AFTER A BIT OF "GENTLE PERSUASION", WE GOT 'EM TALKING. HERE'S THE FULL SKINNY. JUST KEEP IT UNDER YOUR HAT.





Word is you've been mouthing off about *The Getaway 2*. How it's gonna be all this and that. Well you don't know nuffink. Not till you've heard it from the nag's north and south. Get a load of this...

>> In what areas can we expect to see the biggest improvements over the original game?

To achieve everything we wanted in the new version we've had to make some drastic changes to the engine. Luckily, the architecture of the engine was very modular, so we were able to concentrate our efforts in the key areas we wanted to expand on most. Major improvements have been made to the graphics engine allowing us to have more characters in the levels and have a much more moody atmosphere. We've also been working on the dynamics to allow improved vehicle handling and some very significant additions. Watch this space! Another area that's been given an overhaul is the enemy intelligence; the bad guys have much more freedom to move around and we have made major improvements to the group behaviour, as well as the traffic.

>> Last year you said that the next step for the series would be another 12 missions concentrating on Marc Hammond. Why was this idea shelved?

This was never more than an initial idea we had very early in development. We had a lot of plans for the next game, and the full sequel was the only option that would cut it.

>> Many people complained that it was difficult to shoot in the first game. Do you feel this criticism was justified? Everyone is entitled to their opinion and if we said that *The Getaway* was perfect we'd be lying. We have taken a long hard look at the player controls, resulting in a complete overhaul of the underlying system. What we have kept from *The Getaway* is the intuitive and simplistic nature of the interface. What we have improved is the ease and precision of character movement.

A lot of third-person games allow the player to control the camera, but for a cinematic game like *The Getaway*, the camera is a powerful tool for creating atmosphere in the level. We have been working hard on improving the camera to make the gameplay experience as gritty, real and enjoyable as possible. The philosophy behind *The Getaway*'s camera has always been that the player should play the game, not the camera.

>> Do you intend to improve the shooting in the sequel? We have made improvements and additions to all aspects of the control, in both driving and on-foot modes. There are some great new additions to the character combat move set, some are now unique to specific characters

and locations, while there have been some very exciting improvements to the way the health of the player is reflected in the control of the character.

>> Will we see more in the way of traffic to reflect London's notoriously congested roads?

Since the congestion charge was introduced into London we've actually seen a large fall of traffic in the Capital!

>> Has the area of London used in the first game been expanded or changed in any way for *The Getaway 2*?

The Getaway's focus has always been central London, that's the interesting part. The focus this time round has been to add more depth and detail. There really was no point in expanding the city outward to the suburbs, that's not really of interest to anyone. The story takes you through a brand new set of locations including over 17 brand new interior locations. We've added much more depth to the city.

"IT'S A STORY ABOUT HEROES AND ANTI-HEROES, COPPERS AND GANGSTERS; PEOPLE OUT OF THEIR DEPTH, TRYING TO SURVIVE AGAINST THE ODDS."

>> What can you tell us about the new character Eddie O'Connor? How similar to Marc Hammond is he?

The main gangster character in *The Getaway 2* is Eddie O'Connor. He's a traditional gangster, thug and anti-hero in every sense of the word. Deadly and heroic, he's not afraid of confrontation, but he has brains to match his brawn. Eddie is an amateur boxer and part-time thug who gets in over his head on a supposedly simple job. This sets off a chain of events, eventually sending him into an explosive showdown with the new London gangland king.

>> What new game modes are being included?

Last year it was suggested that a Black Cab and London Bus mode were omitted from *The Getaway* due to lack of time, but might make an appearance in the sequel. Free roaming will be available from the beginning too. We know a lot of people in London who wanted to drive around the places they lived, work and hung out.

>> What are the major themes that *The Getaway 2* deals with? Do you think they will prove controversial? The themes of the new game follow *The Getaway* tradition of realism in London's ganglands. We've never set out to be controversial; we simply reflect real life.

>> What can you tell us about the storyline to the new game? Is it a direct sequel to the original, or does the story begin completely afresh?

The new *Getaway* is not a sequel in the traditional sense, but it does build on the events of the first game. *The Getaway* was a snapshot of the events taking place in London in that time, the new game is a new snapshot of what's happening now. As the two games take place in the same city there are some very obvious common elements, but the new story is not just a simple continuation from the end of the first game.

We pick up the story two years after the events on the Sol Vita. London has moved on, but some things never change. New gangs have moved in, some old gangs are making new friends, some of the villains are getting desperate and it's getting dangerous. It's a story about heroes and anti-heroes, coppers and gangsters; about people out of their depth, trying to survive against the odds and come out on top.

>> What about other forms of transport? Will we be able to get on the tube network this time?

Significant enhancements have been made to the vehicle list. We have more variety in the vehicles available, as well as improved quality in both the visual appearance and feel of the cars.

>> Will *The Getaway 2* stick with the 'no icons' concept of screen display? How about a map?

We have been busy looking at new and innovative ways to provide feedback without breaking the cinematic clarity of no on-screen display. Realism and 'Zero Screen Litter' are central parts of the cinematic philosophy of *The Getaway*, it's something we hold very dear to our hearts. Although the new game sees an evolution of the principals set out in *The Getaway*, the central idea of cinematic clarity will not be changing.

>> How sizeable a task is it to get all the necessary permissions for use of vehicles and shops in the game? The backdrop of London isn't much of a problem because it's considered 'incidental'. Securing car brands can be harder though. Some car manufacturers don't like to be associated with the kind of story we are discussing.





CONFLICT: VIETNAM

> GENRE	ACTION
> DEVELOPER	PIVOTAL GAMES
> PUBLISHER	SCI
> OUT	SEPTEMBER
> ONLINE	NO

**JUNGLES, MUD, BULLETS, AMBUSHES AND
POINTY STICKS SMEARED WITH YOU KNOW
WHAT — WELCOME TO VIETNAM, SOLDIER!**

A DITCH IN THE A SHAU VALLEY, VIETNAM, 1968. IT'S RAINING. IT'S always raining. Sarge is next to you, scratching his crotch and bitching about some Hanoi girl who gave him something nasty, but you're not really listening. You pull something with pincers and too many legs out of your hair, jam your helmet back on and check your damp M60. Yep, still loaded. Always loaded. Sixteen hours without a sniff of the enemy, but the gooks are still out there. You know they're out there because it's too quiet. You look up, but all you can see are the steaming tendrils of the endless creepers, hanging down like dead man's arms. All around you the forest breathes an uncanny silence. Something's gotta give.

There's a high-pitched crack, and Sarge nudges you. As you turn around to question him, you notice the blood on your shoulder. Sarge has fallen onto you, and he's vomiting gore out of a large hole in his neck. You yell for backup as you try to spot the faces between the trees. Another shot cracks out, and you jump into the ditch up to your belly in mud. Perhaps you should've gone draft-dodging with those hippies up in Canada after all.

>



“ALTHOUGH ARCADE-LIKE IN PLACES THERE IS A REAL DEPTH TO GAMEPLAY.”

Of course, all this isn't really taking place halfway around the world, 36 years ago. It's happening in the silicon bowels of the PlayStation2 right about now. It's what *Conflict: Vietnam* is all about. Four soldiers under your direct orders, stuck in the middle of 'Nam, surrounded by Vietcong. You can tell them what to do, or take direct control of any one of them if you like. Although playing *Conflict: Vietnam* is a very straightforward, even arcade-like experience in places, it conceals a depth of gameplay that isn't that far removed from (whisper it in an alarmingly low voice) strategic Tom Clancy games like *Ghost Recon: Jungle Storm* or even *Rainbow Six 3*. Only, you know, a bit more fun.

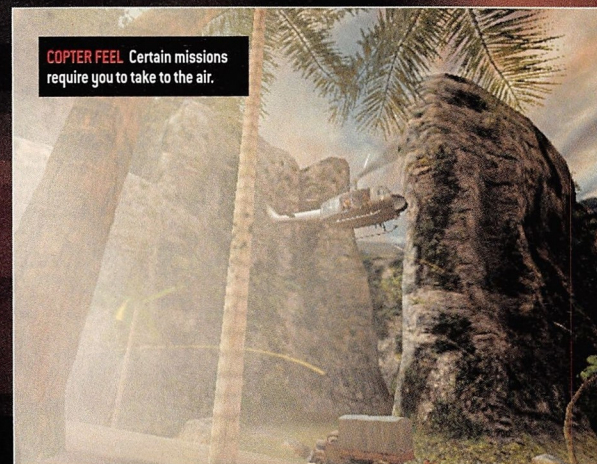
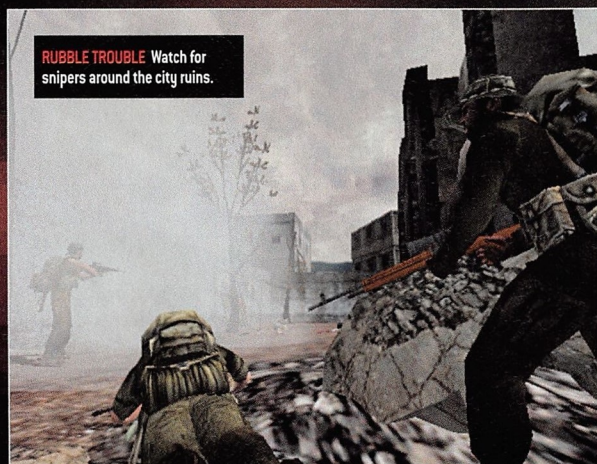
KNOW YOUR HISTORY

Conflict: Vietnam is the new episode of a series that made its name simulating that other controversial US-led conflict: the first Gulf War. The first *Conflict: Desert Storm* was okay. Surprisingly playable and ambitious, in fact, for a game we thought would be a bit of a cheap attempt to make some easy money off the back of international tension. *Conflict: Desert Storm 2* was better. The development team had refined the gameplay and introduced enough variation and subtlety to take the basic four-man, semi-

strategic play to a higher level. We enjoyed playing tag with tanks, and we enjoyed ordering around four people in real time even more. Thanks to a simple system that kept your soldiers mostly safe when you weren't controlling them and allowed you to heal any of them who hadn't been blown into tiny pieces, we got quite into the concept of switching between sappers, snipers and machine gunners to accomplish our freedom-loving ends. Best of all, there were times when you could throw caution to the wind and simply run in shooting merry hell out of everything in sight. Now that's what we call proper war gaming, PSW style.

One problem remained though; it was still set in the desert, or more precisely the bombed-out shell of Baghdad during the first Gulf War again. Which meant that if you weren't hiding behind a sand dune, you were likely to get spotted and killed. Graphics were workmanlike but hardly cutting-edge, and we eventually got bored of Baghdad. So it was a pleasant surprise when we heard that the *Conflict* series' developer Pivotal Games was ditching the itchy sand action for something a whole lot more challenging — the jungle-based combat of the Vietnam War.

We've done jungle combat of a squad-based nature recently with Tom Clancy's *Ghost Recon: Jungle Storm*. There were a couple of problems with





GRITTY REALISM The action and the language aren't for kids.

this otherwise worthy title, though. The first was that it looked like it was made out of chipboard, and the second was that it was so hardcore, actual marines made excuses about broken thumbs rather than play it. The only other shooter we've played thus far with a similarly high quota of jungle action in is *Medal of Honor: Frontline*. And that let us down quite severely, what with its blocky plant life and jungles that turned out to be one-way chutes to the next area instead of uniquely explorable environments. So it's clear that the time is ripe for a proper rumble in the jungle. And we're not talking about jumping on Jordan or beating up Peter Andre. Although we kind of wish we were.

Conflict: Vietnam is pretty serious about plugging this gap. For a start, there's the weighty question of the look of it all. If you compare *Medal of Honor: Frontline*'s decidedly dodgy underbrush with *Conflict: Vietnam*'s luxuriant growth, we think you'll be pleasantly surprised. For a start, there aren't any suspiciously horizontal leaves. The same old patterns aren't seen all over the forest, and although there are paths to take, there are also heavily wooded areas without an obvious way through to the other side. Vegetation reacts to exterior pressure, bending back under the force of explosions and quivering when helicopters land nearby.

In all other ways, it's pretty unfair to compare Electronic Arts' Pacific war game with *Conflict: Vietnam*. For a start, it's a different war, and in a different country too. (Alright, okay, so they are in the same hemisphere, but that hardly counts.) The main difference, however, is that *Medal of Honor: Frontline* is a shooting game. You move to a new area and kill everyone there. Sure, there are complications. You can rescue civilians, take the odd alternative path, and find all sorts of big guns. But what you can't do is control a team to get through a hostile environment. A while back, we'd have been cock-a-hoop for *Medal of Honor*'s intensely >



JEEP AS CHIPS Commandeer various army and enemy vehicles.

WHAT'S THE DRILL, SARGE?

PSW GETS A BRIEFING FROM PIVOTAL GAMES MANAGING DIRECTOR JIM BAMBRA.

In moving from the Gulf to Vietnam, you've gone from the desert to the jungle. How have you gone about realising this new environment? We spent a lot of time in botanical gardens, to get the look and feel of the plants. That was the starting point. A big challenge as a developer was going from a world that's sparse to one that's populated with trees and making it viable and also dense, so we did a lot of work on the graphics engine to upgrade it, get it optimised. A lot of people have gone for 2D textures. All our stuff is 3D, you can move around everywhere. Lots of hard work! We knew at the start it was the biggest challenge, to get organic environments working.

What did you think of the jungle in *Medal of Honor: Rising Sun*? I was disappointed with it. In general it was very spartan, and the enemy AI was... not there. The characters didn't react to guys on your side shooting past them. We pride ourselves that our AI is good, but it's always getting better. We want the enemy to be much more reactive, outthinking you. In our game we've got four guys to control so you can't just channel them down a single corridor. Enemies have to be able to respond to any situation.

Do you think that you're letting yourselves in for any controversy, making a game about the Vietnam War?

I don't see it as a problem. We're in the business of entertainment, telling stories. I don't really give a shit who won or lost the Vietnam War. The focus is on these four guys cut off behind enemy lines. We could have placed that in World War II, made a different game with the same story. We wanted a different environment and to me, what I like is to take something that somebody knows a bit about and show them how little they know. Everybody knows there was a war in Vietnam. We don't tell you who won the war or what's going on. In any case, I have the utmost respect for the people who did it for real.

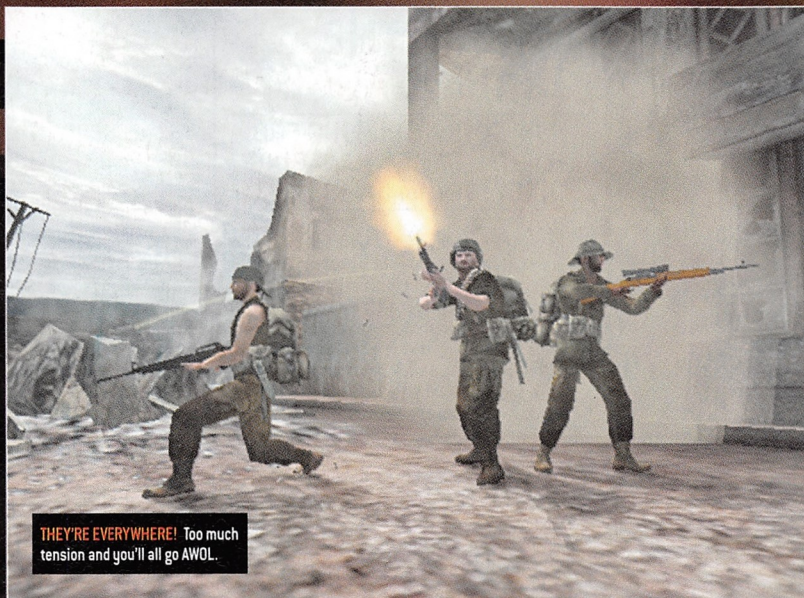
What sort of research did you have to do to get everything looking and feeling just right?

Lots of reading, lots of internet research. We had stacks of books dealing with the war: manuals on tanks, handbooks, photographs. Watching movies was great fun — Mel Gibson made *We Were Soldiers* just after we started the project, which was good to watch. It's all about immersing yourself in it, the look and feel of Vietnam. But not to the extent of being needlessly realistic. To be honest, the Gulf's a lot flatter than we made it look in the *Conflict: Desert Storm* games!

These soldiers seem to have more personality than those games did. The *Desert Storm* team were Special Forces professionals. They did a job and they did it well. In Vietnam, there's the battle-hardened sergeant Ragman who holds the team together. Then there's the Alabaman redneck, plus Junior the New Yorker who's been drafted and doesn't want to be there, and Cherry the new guy. A lot of the game's seen from his perspective. Each of these characters are individual, and moan about stuff like the rain!



COVER ME "Jones, you take the left flank and — Jones? Uh oh..."



THEY'RE EVERYWHERE! Too much tension and you'll all go AWOL.

structured play, but we're currently lusting after something a little bit more open-ended. We've played through enough environments that seem to open out expansively, only to discover they're actually just big corridors in disguise. We want exploration, teamwork and maybe even a little bit of strategy. Not too much strategy though, because we can't afford the pac-a-macs and sandals. But a bit. Which is exactly where *Conflict: Vietnam* comes in.

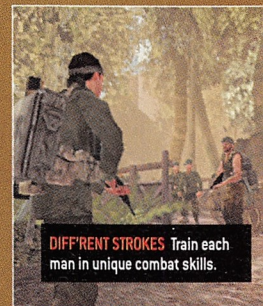
I WANNA BE YOUR THRILL INSTRUCTOR

In Baghdad you controlled SAS and other special forces; all highly trained operatives who wouldn't blink an eyelid if you told them to run to their death as a decoy, or wade into the crossfire to take out a hard-to-reach

"YOUR ACTIONS MAKE A REAL DIFFERENCE TO THE OUTCOME."

enemy. Not so now. Your four men are individuals, with their own speech, characteristics and special skills. They're also four lonely, frightened, desperate men, ready to snap at the sound of gunfire or run like hell if they lose their nerve. Send a man into a potentially hostile situation and he might well lose it, screaming "F*** this!" while emptying round after round into the nearest bushes instead of Vietcong troops.

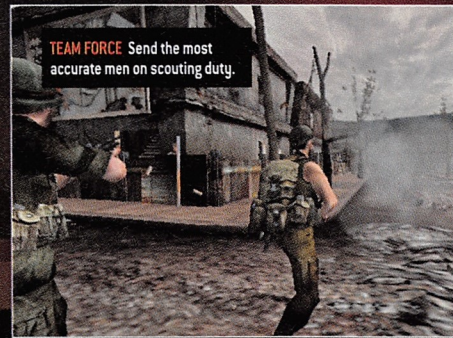
As team leader you won't just have to lead your men through enemy lines. You'll have to make sure you can control them. Fortunately, it's now even easier to order them around. When a man is down, you can now order another member of your team to heal them instead of having to run over there yourself and leave others exposed. You can also have other team members carry out specific actions while you lay down covering fire. It's all



in the service of making it both fun and simple to command soldiers, rather than turning it into some kind of horrible strategy chore. As always, if you simply want to bust in and start shooting, you can. You'll even be able to complete early missions this way. But later on, it pays to start using your head as well as your trigger finger when you're confronted with hordes of well-trained enemy fighters. And we really do mean well trained, because everything you can do, the enemy can do too. Probably better.

CHARLIE'S NO ANGEL

This is because enemies, who weren't exactly a pushover before, are even cleverer now. Instead of simply deciding what to do on their own, they'll now take into account the actions of their fellow fighters. If an enemy soldier's trapped, they won't just run in a random direction. Instead they're more likely to flee the field of battle to call reinforcements (who'll actually turn up) or run to the safety of their nearest companions. It means that every time you play through a mission, your actions make a huge difference to the outcome of any battle. Fail to hit that running enemy in the back, and he'll return with all the local hard-cases to take you out. If you start running, don't expect to be able to lose enemies either. No enemy is artificially tied to patrolling a particular area, so they're all able to pursue you through the jungle, no matter how far. Try chucking a grenade at them, and they'll pick it up and throw it back. In fact, they'll even kick it away if there's no time to throw it. Fortunately, so will your buddies, so at least it's a level playing





WE'VE SEEN YOUR TYPE BEFORE...

HOW *CONFLICT: VIETNAM* FITS INTO THE CROWDED FIELD OF CURRENT SHOOTERS.

FOUR MAN SQUADS LIKE...



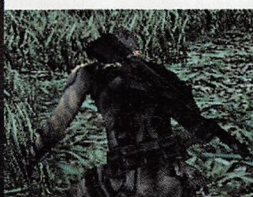
> RAINBOW SIX 3

IN VIETNAM LIKE...



> SHELLSHOCK: 'NAM 67'

STEALTH ELEMENTS LIKE...



> SPLINTER CELL: PT

US TROOPS IN THE JUNGLE LIKE...



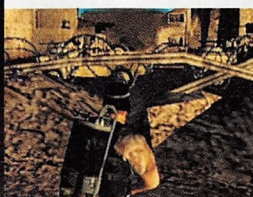
> MOH: RISING SUN

ORDER YOUR TEAM LIKE...



> SOCOM II: U.S. NAVY SEALS

IN THE SAME SERIES AS...



> CONFLICT: DESERT STORM 2

OUTDOOR STRATEGY LIKE...



> GHOST RECON: JUNGLE STORM

60S SURVIVAL HIJINKS LIKE...



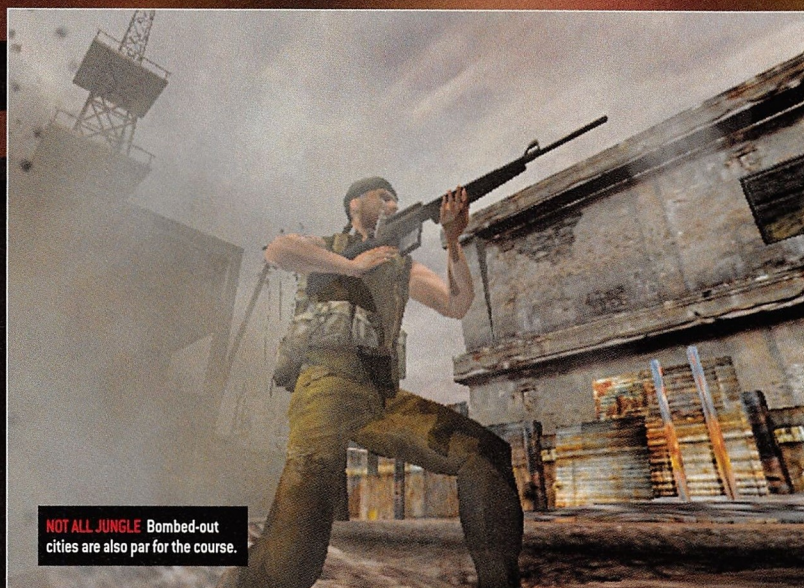
> METAL GEAR SOLID 3

field. In fact, the team behind *Conflict: Vietnam* has been struggling to make the enemies stupid enough to defeat. If they were allowed to use their full range of tactical abilities, only the most skilled strategist would be able to survive.

Then there are the traps. It wouldn't be Vietnam circa 1968 without them. Remember that the Vietcong didn't just use guns to take out their US enemy. They were a rural force used to fighting in the jungle environment, and in *Conflict: Vietnam* they use every dirty trick they can. Most entertainingly lethal are the punji stakes – sharpened sticks covered with human poo, designed not just to maim but also to infect the unlucky GI who walks into it. 'Bouncing betty' mines jump up to about waist height when they're triggered, before exploding and taking your torso with them. There will be eight sorts of mantrap in all, but we're not going to spoil the surprise entirely by revealing what they all are. So if you want to know what a 'Malayan gate' does, or what a 'crow's foot' is, you'll just have to play *Conflict: Vietnam* when it comes out.

The level of immersion in the heart-pounding world of war extends to the themes of the levels. Don't expect to be given straightforward





NOT ALL JUNGLE Bombed-out cities are also par for the course.

'search and destroy' missions like you see in some military sims every time. Instead, you'll need to command your war-torn team through a host of sticky situations right from the start. In the first mission, instead of merely being trained in the controls, you'll have to reach an injured comrade in the middle of battle. The second mission sees you venturing out into the wilds, before being attacked by Vietcong militia. Just when you reach the safety of a US base, it gets attacked, and eventually you'll be left stranded in the middle of an East Asian jungle with little more than your dog tags for protection. You'll really need to use your survival skills here. All in all, 14 levels compare favourably with *Desert Storm 2*'s 10. There are, we are told, even some missions where it's not raining.

THE FIRST CASUALTY OF WAR IS YOU

All this hyper-real, intelligent strategic fighting can get a little heavy on the old brain-pan after a while. Real combat also has its fair share of mindless shooting, and so does *Conflict: Vietnam*. For instance, one mission sees you riding the waves of the old French canals that scar the Vietnamese countryside. In the manner of crazed 'Nam flick, *Apocalypse Now*, you'll be one of the men on board, scanning the tree-lined horizon intently for murderous Vietcong. When the onslaught comes, you'll be hard put to wipe them all out as they swarm at you from boats, canalside huts, out of the forest and even from the water. It's fast, it's frenetic, it has absolutely no strategy involved whatsoever. Likewise, you'll be transported in a UH-1B helicopter, known colloquially as a 'Huey', over enemy territory. If you don't want to get perforated by enemy bullets, you'll have to shoot your way out of trouble from the air.

These two examples don't have you controlling the vehicle, merely gunning down enemies, but you will be able to take the wheel of an impressive number of other military vehicles. Anyone who enjoyed wrenching a Jeep around the desert in the previous *Conflict* games won't be disappointed by the amount of vehicles included in this one, from Patton tanks to enemy armoured cars. If it's shooting you like, you can always take



SHELL SHOCKED Enemy tactics vary immensely, so watch out.

control of the man in the gunner's chair. If driving's more your thing, you can command that man to open fire and take the part of the driver instead. It's this kind of open-plan gameplay that we like about the *Conflict* series; it transforms the game from being just another generic arcade action shooter into something a damn sight more interesting.

'NAM OF THE GAME

Most gratifyingly, attention to detail seems to be a big watchword with *Conflict: Vietnam*. You can now pick up enemy weapons, which seems eminently sensible given that you're in the middle of alien jungle without any backup whatsoever. Heads and limbs will all be removable, with attendant consequences — don't expect a Vietcong soldier to be able to kick a grenade back at you if he's only got one leg. Just to prove how serious the development team are the cinematic music is being recorded by a full orchestra. And expect to see almost every bit of ordnance that was used in the real war. There's everything from ancient Tommy guns to giant RPGs, via Maxim machine guns, flamethrowers, M16s and M60s. There are even AA guns, not to mention all the mounted weaponry on the many vehicles. The 40mm M-79 grenade launcher's our weapon of choice, though. Maybe that jungle heat was getting to us at the time, but there's nothing like a big, fat explosion to make those 'damn commies' see sense.

So we're all hyped up about our next tour of duty. There's not much bad



I SEE HIM! Enemies have stealth and camouflage on their side.



WAR IS HELL. *Conflict: Vietnam* won't be tough. We hope.



WOOD FOR THE TREES Dense undergrowth, forbidding mood.



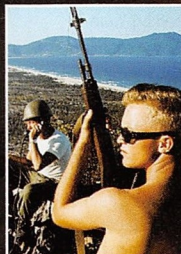
FOLLOW THE LEADER But you can control any man directly.



MEET THE TEAM Each member looks and sounds different.

CLASS OF '68

MEET THE MEN YOU'LL BE GUIDING THROUGH HELL.



Nickname: Hoss

A good ol' boy from the Deep South, Will 'Hoss' Sheffer would be chewing corn straws if he hadn't been drafted.

Likes: Banjos, tearing the ears off corpses.

Hates: Being given orders of any sort.



Nickname: Ragman

Sarge Frank 'Ragman' Weir is the hardest man this side of Hanoi. More scary than a division of Vietcong when he's in a mood.

Likes: The smell of napalm — at any time of day.

Hates: Undisciplined troops all in his face.



Nickname: Junior

Bruce 'Junior' Lesh was pulled from the mean streets of Queens, New York to fight — much against his will.

Likes: The thought of leaving 'Nam in 30 days..

Hates: Hoss. Thinks he's redneck scum.



Nickname: Cherry

Harold Kahler joined the army after med school. Called 'Cherry' because he's a war virgin. That'll soon change though...

Likes: Healing the sick, thinking too deeply.

Hates: Mud, guns, being shouted at.

“CONFLICT: VIETNAM SHOULD BE ONE OF THE YEAR'S COMBAT HIGHLIGHTS.”

news to report, thankfully. But for all *Conflict: Vietnam's* pleasure potential, we can see a few tiny stumbling blocks ahead. For example, the team were quite happy to talk about the immense number of Vietnam movies they'd seen, and the game is filled with cunning and detailed homages to 'Nam flicks like *Platoon*, *Hamburger Hill* and even the Vietnam-based bits of *Forrest Gump*. But we don't just want a 'best of' compilation of movie moments. We want the real deal — the actual Vietnam conflict in all its gory glory — not some watered-down movie version. And there's also the shooter *Shellshock: Nam '67* approaching from the makers of *Killzone* too, which could steal some of *Conflict: Vietnam's* thunder if it's as authentic as we think it will be. Aside from that, this *Conflict* should be one of this year's combat highlights and a very enjoyable game to play too. Just remember to pack an extra belt of ammo before you get started.

FIRST OPINIONS

It's nice to see a series mature. It's even nicer to see it morph into a crazed guerrilla warfare sim right before your eyes. From what we've seen and played, *Conflict: Vietnam* has every chance of delivering on its promise of serious jungle combat with an action strategy twist. It aims to be an easy game to pick up and play, but with enough troop-commanding depth to keep you immersed and coming back for more. This is hardly an easy mission to pull off, but judging by the steady improvement of the *Conflict* series to date we think they'll manage it. Visually, it's already looking lush and green, just like a real jungle. Bring it on, we say — and don't hold back on the napalm either!

/JOFF BROWN

BIG CHOPPER

No, he's not particularly pleased to see you either. Prepare to meet his mighty axe.



“CHARACTERS SHOUT
ADVICE AT YOU AS IF
YOU’RE AN IDIOT.”

BLOODSTONE

THE TEAM BEHIND *THE TWO TOWERS* GAME SERVES UP A SECOND HACK AND SLASH ADVENTURE. BUT WILL IT HAVE THE POWER TO RULE THEM ALL?

> GENRE	ACTION ADVENTURE
> DEVELOPER	STORMFRONT
> PUBLISHER	ATARI
> OUT	SEPTEMBER
> ONLINE	NO

AS HACK AND SLASH GAMES GO, *THE TWO*

Towers was like a blueprint of what you'd always wanted. It was so well made and completely absorbing that you almost forgot how shallow and repetitive the levels were. So another hack and slasher from the same developer is bound to repeat the same formula, right? Well, almost.

Our only gripe with *The Two Towers* was that you couldn't switch between Aragorn, Legolas and Gimli during levels. Not so here. Even if you have a preferred character, there are situations that'll force you to use one of the other two. For instance, in the old mill where your troupe is attacked by spiders that constantly hatch from hanging egg sacs, you need to use the rogue and fighter characters to keep the arachnids at bay, while the sorcerer's ranged attack destroys the sacs. Just in case you don't quite grasp this style of gameplay, the other two characters will shout advice at you like, "Use your ranged attacks on the egg sacs", as if you're an idiot.

Later on in the same level when you take the raft downstream you'll need to use ranged attacks to kill the enemies lined up on the riverbank and bridges, then quickly switch to the fighter or rogue to dispatch those who climb onto the raft. The pair not under your control work fine on PS2 autopilot, but if you need something doing urgently you're best off switching.

KING COBRA

This is especially true when you enter the temple that houses the Bloodstone gem and come up against the boss creature being resurrected by Yuan-Ti serpents. The more creatures it eats, the more powerful it becomes. Only a certain number of sacrifices are allowed to slip through or it's game over, but you must also find time to cut free the Bloodstone gem. You'll need to control your characters wisely.

Like *The Two Towers*, the trio earn experience points to level up with at the end of stages, and they can also upgrade their weapons and armour using any gold collected. The rogue is probably the most overlooked character at present, though she does take a starring role on the way to the temple. One of her abilities is to hide in the shadows, which lets her creep up on patrolling Yuan-Ti serpents and kill them before they sound a gong alarm, and she can also jump onto platforms to reach treasure.

Bloodstone isn't the most ambitious effort we've seen this year, preferring to remain within your expectations of a third-person action adventure game. But when the action is this relentless and the design this slick we can forgive the whiff of over-familiarity for now.

FIRST OPINIONS

Trudging through the world of *Dungeons & Dragons* with three conventional fantasy characters doesn't have the same appeal as defending Helm's Deep with Aragorn and friends, but *Bloodstone* already looks like bettering *The Two Towers*. Visually it's great, the pace never lets up and the level design ensures that each character gets a turn in the limelight.

/ JONATHAN TODD



BLOODSTONE FACT!

> FORGET-ME-NOT

Bloodstone is set in the D&D *Forgotten Realms* world, also used in *Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance* games.

> ACTION ALL THE WAY

Bloodstone uses the same graphics engine as *The Two Towers*, which allows for continuous action.

> THE WRITE STUFF

Prominent *Forgotten Realms* author R.A. Salvatore has worked directly with the developer on the story.

> SPEAK EASY

Robert Goodman, the Emmy award-winning writer of *Batman Beyond* comics is polishing the dialogue.



THAT'S MAGIC: The mage can heal the other two.



BACKSTAB: Zhai the rogue can sneak up on serpents.

DOUBLE VISION

BLOODSTONE DOESN'T JUST LOOK LIKE *THE TWO TOWERS* — IT'S PRACTICALLY A CARBON COPY.

HEROES



THE TWO TOWERS

Three characters: one a battle-hardened warrior (Gimli), one with a strong long-ranged attack (Legolas) and one with all-round abilities (Aragorn).



BLOODSTONE

Three characters: one a battle-hardened warrior, one with a strong long-ranged attack and one with all round abilities. Sounds awfully familiar, eh?

ABILITIES



THE TWO TOWERS

Gimli and Legolas are near-opposites in terms of speed and ranged attacks, while Aragorn is skilled with both his sword and his bow.



BLOODSTONE

The fighter and the mage are near-opposites in terms of ranged attacks but similar in speed, while the rogue is the quickest but also the weakest.

BATTLES



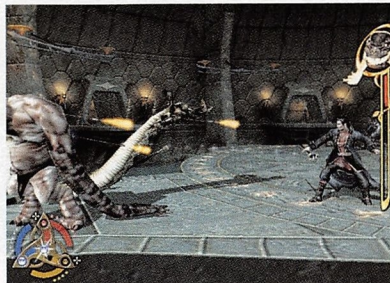
THE TWO TOWERS

Defeat an army of orcs in the temple-like Mines of Moria level, followed by a boss fight against a cave troll that you can only defeat by countering its attack pattern.



BLOODSTONE

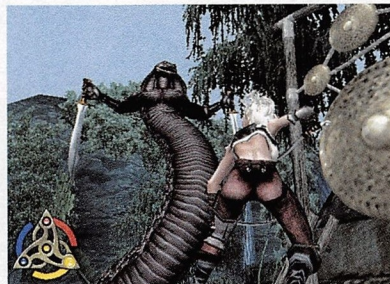
Defeat an army of Yuan-Ti serpents, and you are rewarded with a boss fight against a huge snake that you kill by preventing it feeding on hypnotised creatures.



SNACK TIME: Stop the boss snake from eating too many slaves.



SNEAK ATTACK: Prevent them banging the gong to call back-up.



LAID BARE: She's not the best fighter, but she's got a great butt.



IT'S A MELEE: The mage's long-range attack isn't much use here.



HEADS UP: The warrior wields two swords at once.



PLOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK PLOT

PLOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK PLOT

SPOR
SPOILER DO NOT LOOK PLOT SPOIL
DO NOT LOOK PLOT SPOIL

GENRE	ACTION ADVENTURE
DEVELOPER	UBI SOFT
PUBLISHER	UBI SOFT
OUT	JUNE
ONLINE	YES



SPLINTER CELL: PANDORA TOMORROW

Don't be left in the dark by Sam Fisher's return to the shadows. *PSW* has everything you need to know about the biggest stealth game of the year.

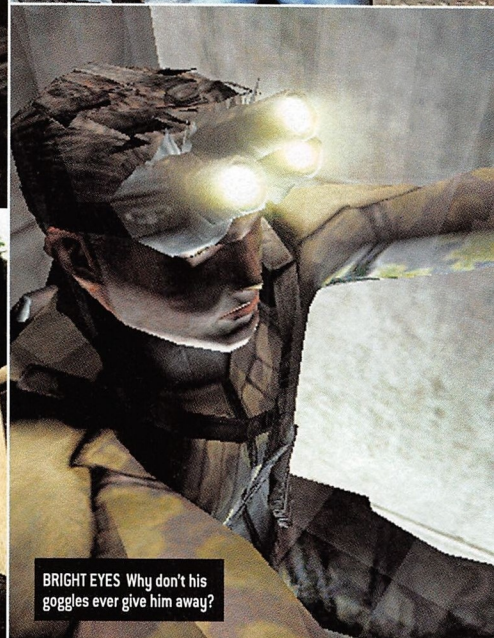
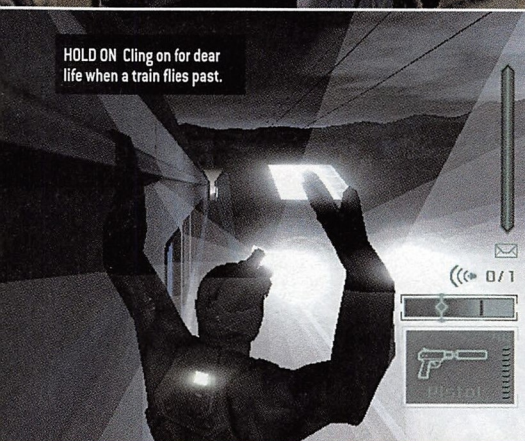
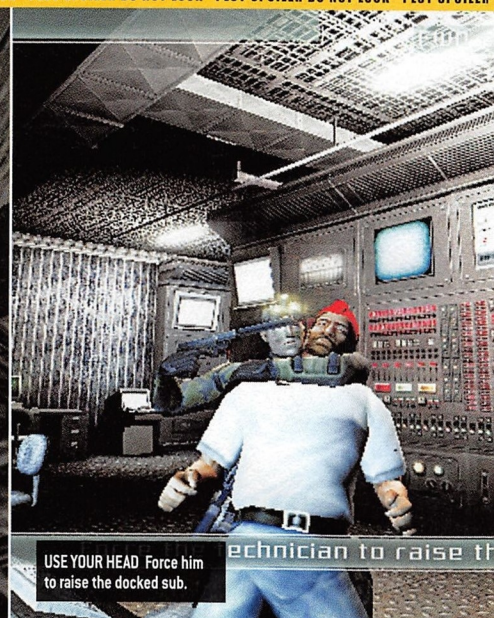
THERE'S A FLEETING MOMENT IN *PANDORA TOMORROW* THAT

suggests a sense of humour has finally been unearthed in the development team's secret underground bunker. It's where Sam Fisher has to sneak across a courtyard without being detected by searchlights — usually a crouch-walk in a dark park for him. Except this time he's tasked with remaining inside the roaming circles of bright light instead of the shadows. A guard sporting a sniper rifle and a natty pair of night vision goggles is positioned on the other side and his only Achilles' heel is when looking directly at the blinding harsh light. Thank God there's someone poking fun at the rules of the game, because *Pandora Tomorrow* is still a ruthless exercise in trial-and-error. And that's with the emphasis on making errors. Lots of them. These will either have you praising the bastard-hard authenticity of the game, or cursing its very existence.

Never ones to shirk a challenge though, we've endured high blood pressure and made everyone in the office endure high volume swearing after accidentally blowing Fisher's cover for the billionth time, only to emerge on the other side with the lowdown on every mission and plot twist, plus the full kit and caboodle on the multiplayer mode. So, as Les from SBS might say: "If you don't want to know the result, look away now."

SHAKE A LEG

We kick off Fisher's one-man crusade against an Indonesian terrorist network with a mission called US Embassy. The objective is to recover and destroy security intelligence from under the suspicious noses of the terrorists and their guerrilla leader Suhadi Sadono. This gives a perfect excuse early on to show off Fisher's even more painful-looking agility. The major new move is the SWAT turn which, from a starting position of your back against one side of an open doorway, allows you to spin 360 degrees across the partition and finish with your back pressed against the other side. Amazingly, even if an enemy goon happens to be staring straight out of the open door, Fisher moves with such guile and speed that he won't be seen. Another new move is an extension of the ball-busting Split-jump from the first game, now called the Half-split as it lets you shift weight from one leg to the other while suspended. Ouch. Then there's the one where you wrap your legs around a beam and extend downwards so you can grip a weapon with two hands. And when hi-tech gadgets and abnormal reflexes fail to outwit or distract guards, they'll nearly always fall for the simplest of tricks — a whistle sound. In terms of weapons and gadgets, meanwhile, the pistol now has a laser sight that enemies might spot being trained on their bodies, while the upgraded thermal and night vision-equipped optical



42 PSW ISSUE 21

NOT LOOK PLOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK



NOT LOOK PLOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK

PLOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK PLOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK PLOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK PLOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK

EVERY MISSION EXPOSED!

PANDORA TOMORROW'S TWISTY-TURNY STORY REVEALED MISSION BY MISSION. IF YOU DON'T WANT TO KNOW THE SCORE...



1. US EMBASSY

Briefing: An Indonesian guerrilla group led by Suhadi Sadono has invaded the US Embassy. Hostages include Private Military Corporation CEO Douglas Shetland, who carries intelligence data that you can't let fall into Sadono's hands.



2. WEAPONS RESEARCH

Briefing: An enemy agent codenamed 'Mortified Penguin' has broken into the Saulnier cryogenics lab with a gang of French and Syrian mercenaries. It's up to you to uncover his true identity and discover his motives.



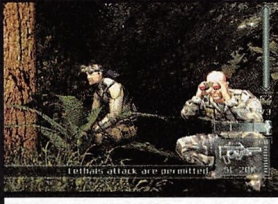
3. HESPERIA

Briefing: Norman Soth is on the southbound Hesperia train accompanied by French and Syrian mercenaries. He's at the other end of the train. Reach and question him to determine whether he's a friend or a foe. Big clue: he's a foe.



4. JERUSALEM MARKET:

Briefing: Third Echelon has linked Sadono's Springfield demonstration to the purchase of an unknown biological agent on the black market. Fisher must meet with Israeli intelligence agent Dahlia Tal to infiltrate the black market.



5. HEROIN VILLAGE

Briefing: 'Pandora Tomorrow' is the code for Sadono's insurance policy against a US attack. He makes daily calls to US locations delaying the release of a smallpox virus for one more day unless he's killed or apprehended. Intercept the call.



6. SUBMARINE DOCK

Briefing: The 'Pandora Tomorrow' call is forwarded through an encrypted relay in the communication system of a docked submarine. Access the communication system in the sub to trace the call.



7. TELEVISION STATION

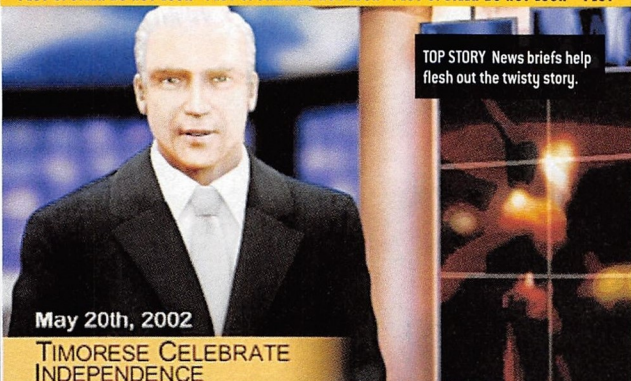
Briefing: After tracing the call there's no need to keep Sadono alive, so he's now open to attack. Meet with CIA operative Ingrid Karlthson who's working undercover in the TV station where Sadono is located and capture him.



8. AIRPORT

Briefing: Soth and his mercenaries have breached Los Angeles airport with plans to unleash the smallpox virus. Kill all the mercenaries, neutralise Soth and recover the virus before it's released on 250 million burger-chomping civilians.

PLOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK PLOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK PLOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK PLOT

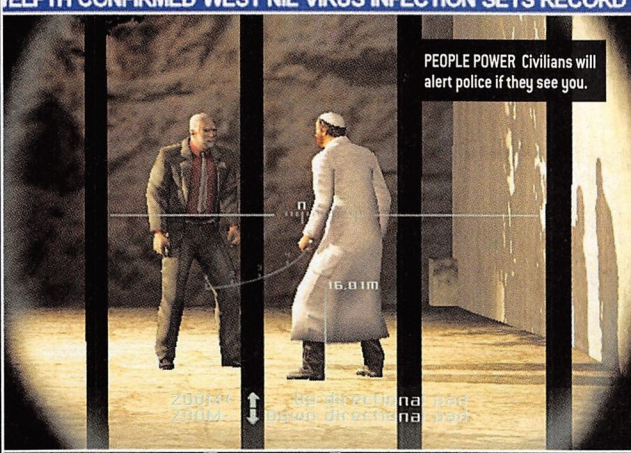


TOP STORY News briefs help flesh out the twisty story.

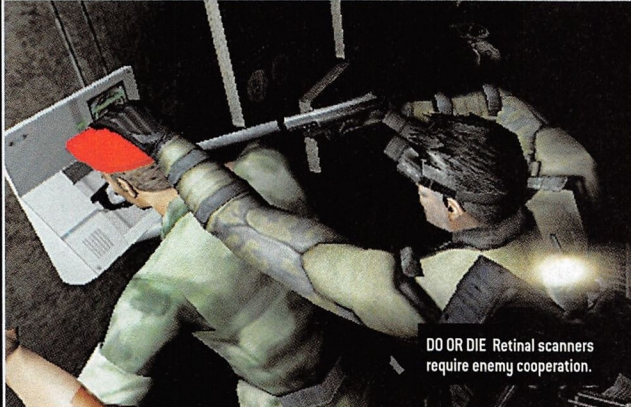
May 20th, 2002

TIMORESE CELEBRATE INDEPENDENCE

ELFTH CONFIRMED WEST NIL VIRUS INFECTION SETS RECORD



PEOPLE POWER Civilians will alert police if they see you.



DO OR DIE Retinal scanners require enemy cooperation.

PLOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK PLOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK PLOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK PLOT

free of civilians, they can still spot Fisher from inside their homes and will run to the nearest patrolling policeman if they do so. With no alarms allowed this is definitely a mission for those with bags of patience.

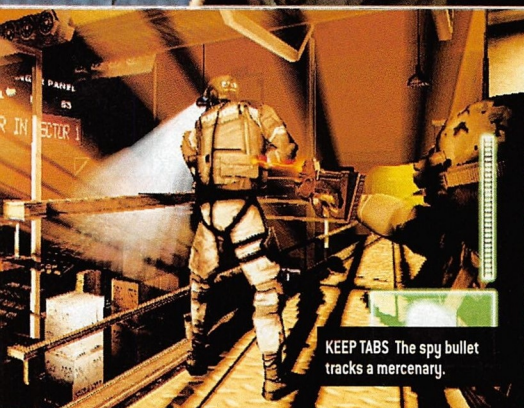
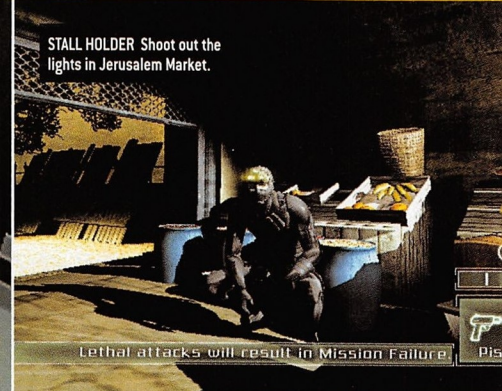
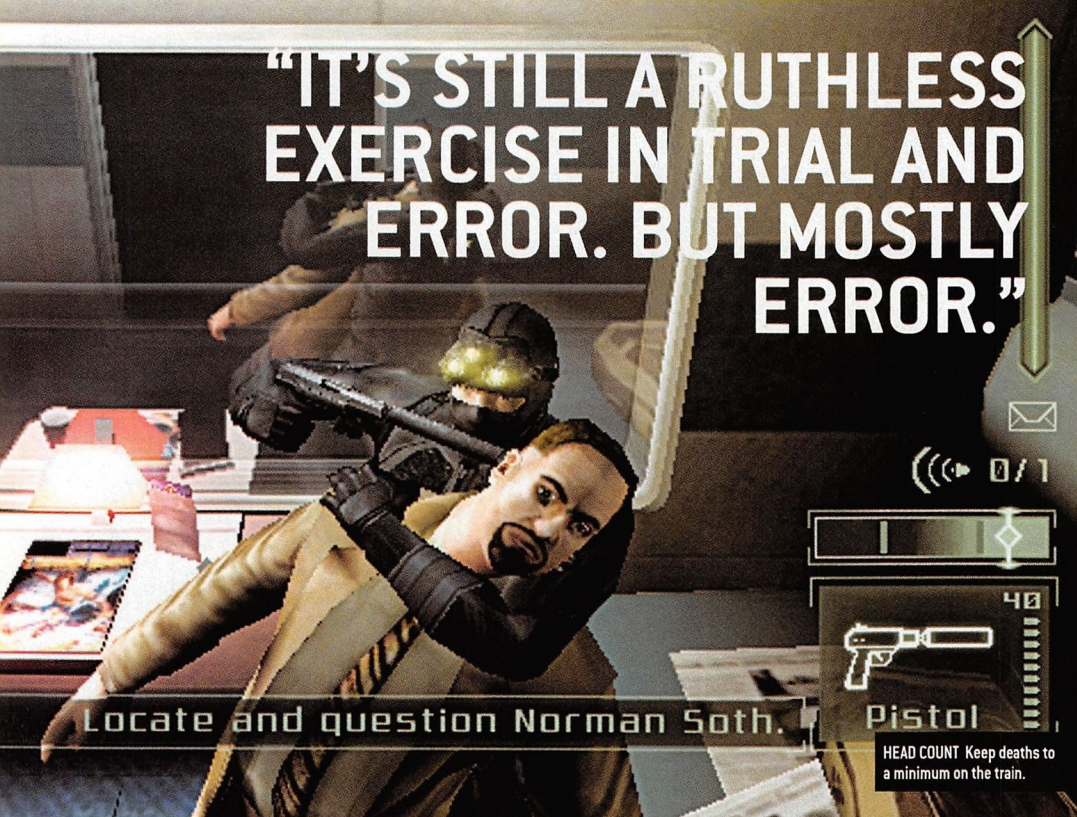
LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION

The most spectacular looking level is called Heroin Village, which shows up about halfway into the game when you're hot on the trail of Sadono and his evil plans. While it's not the full jungle experience to trump *Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater* we were promised, you do at least begin the mission among lush trees and foliage that sway in the breeze and flop back and forth when you move through them. All very nice indeed. Pretty soon though, you're out of the jungle and into the familiar terrorist camp set-up to plant an explosive device on Sadono's plane.

A welcome surprise is the mission called Submarine Dock, where Fisher finally gets to flex his muscles. As ever you begin in lush grass on the edge of a heavily guarded camp, from where you must sneak inside to reach some caves that lead to the sub. For once, there's no conceivable way to reach the sub and make it to the extraction point without a fight. But with the aid of explosive barrels handily placed near groups of enemies your escape isn't so demanding. It's arguably the only section within the entire game that could be described as traditional 'run-and-gun' fun.

Television Station is probably the toughest mission of the lot. Just getting into the building is difficult enough, with your path complicated by a

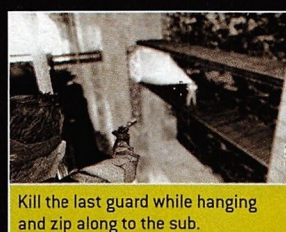
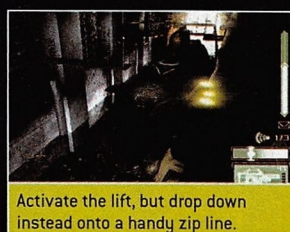
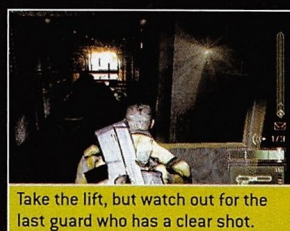
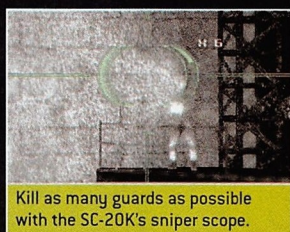
SPLOILER DO NOT LOOK PLOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK PLOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK PLOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK PLOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK PLOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK PLOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK PLOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK PLOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK PLOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK



SPLOILER DO NOT LOOK PLOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK PLOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK PLOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK PLOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK PLOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK PLOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK PLOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK PLOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK

THE HARD WAY OR THE EASY WAY?

ALMOST EVERY PROBLEM HAS TWO SOLUTIONS.



MAPPED OUT

THE SPIES TAKE ON MERCS IN THE NEW MULTIPLAYER MODE.



DEFTECH BELEW

Spies: In your favour are the maze of boxes and crates that suit a third-person perspective. And you can always climb out of trouble.

Mercs: Take advantage of the excellent vantage points and be sure to place surveillance equipment around whatever you're protecting.



SCHERMEHORN

Spies: There are at least three levels to this large map, so climbing or dropping out of harm's way is always possible.

Mercs: The narrow walkways and tight sewer system don't allow the spies much room for a speedy exit, so if you gang up you can easily cut them off.



MUSEUM

Spies: The ventilation system means you can bypass the many security cameras on the ground floor level.

Mercs: If the cameras spot any spies they can be isolated easily as there aren't many ground floor exits... And the museum itself is very well lit.



MOUNT HOSPITAL

Spies: There are some great vantage points in the darker, more decrepit areas of the hospital located upstairs.

Mercs: Again, it's very brightly lit everywhere else. And there are some handy laser traps already in place so you can use your surveillance gadgets elsewhere.

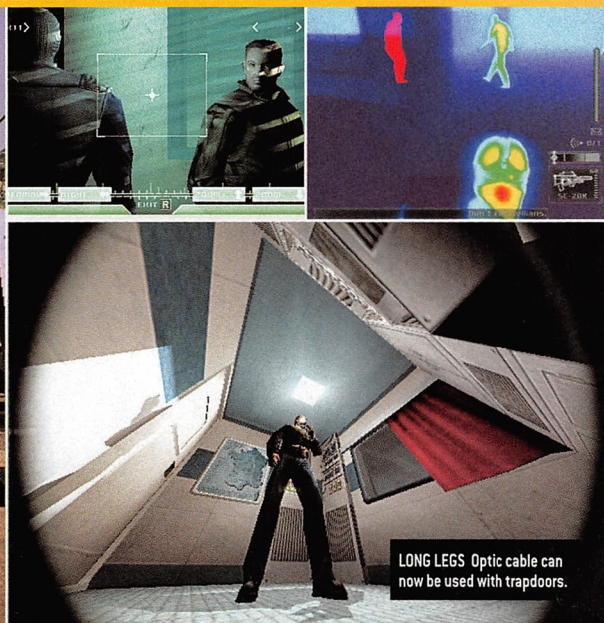


KRAUSER LAB

Spies: It's the smallest map so the tubes are easy to find and bringing them back is pretty straightforward.

Mercs: Since there isn't such a large area to defend you can concentrate your surveillance equipment. The lab doors also take time to open.

PLOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK PLOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK PLOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK PLOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK PLOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK PLOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK PLOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK PLOT SPOILER DO NOT



PLOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK PLOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK PLOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK PLOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK PLOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK PLOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK PLOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK PLOT SPOILER DO NOT

combination of mines that can only be seen using thermal vision and searchlight beams that only normal vision and night vision can pick up. From there you meet CIA agent Ingrid Karlthson and get to actually work alongside her, instead of just listening to expository dialogue. Karlthson is working undercover until a phone call from Soth puts paid to that and she suddenly becomes a prime target. It all culminates in a race to the studio floor in order to grab Sadono from behind before his televised speech under armed guard ends, dragging him to the roof with a gun pointed at his head to meet a waiting chopper.

SWEET DREAMS MY LAX

And so to the final mission: the showdown with the betrayer Soth. He's infiltrated Los Angeles airport with his gang of mercenaries, and together they intend on unleashing the smallpox virus. You begin by sneaking into the back of a cargo truck and must evade detection by police, a very irritating sniffer dog and the usual troupe of security cameras before making it into the airport. One further problem is that the mercs within are disguised as airport employees. You'll only be able to distinguish who's who by using your thermal vision to spot the mercs' increased body temperature — a side-effect of the smallpox vaccination they've all taken.

The single-player game is excellent training for the four-player multiplayer mode, which successfully transfers the stealthy stalking to what's usually considered a bit of a free-for-all environment. The set-up is spies versus mercs in a two-on-two or three-on-one game, with the spies

attempting to infiltrate a base to steal data and the mercs trying to stop them. While the spies are only equipped with non-lethal weapons, the mercs are armed to the teeth with all kinds of surveillance gadgets such as lasers and cameras. Get spotted by a camera when playing as a spy and any nearby doors are sealed off, though these cameras can of course be hacked into. Other merc gadgets include a vision mode that detects when a spy's night/thermal vision goggles are being used and another that only shows moving objects. The odds would be stacked against the spies were it not for their electroshock weapon that causes a merc's controller and screen to shake if you hit them in the body, and their entire heads-up display to clear if you make a head shot. It's a delicate balancing act that's still being tweaked, but with the addition of a restricted first-person view for mercs instead of the spies' more panoramic third-person perspective, the set-up has huge potential.

SPY HUNTER

Within the mercs versus spies multiplayer mode there is a further choice of four individual game types: Neutralisation sees the spies hacking the security system of the virus-carrying ND133; in Sabotage they must hack the control system; in Extraction they must steal the fluorescent green tubes containing the virus and take them to the exit point; in ID Tags it's the ND133 control cards that must be recovered. In truth the quartet play very similar, but obviously there are different strategies to follow depending on which map you play.

NOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK PLOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK PLOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK PLOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK PLOT SPOILER DO NOT



NOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK PLOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK PLOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK PLOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK PLOT SPOILER DO NOT

I KNEW A GIRL CALLED PANDORA

There's no doubting the fact that *Pandora Tomorrow* is one of the most technically accomplished games we've ever played. But it is also one of the most infuriating too, all of which is pretty consistent with the first game. There's still the tendency to be detected without actually knowing how or why, which doesn't really help you learn from your mistakes and is a big turn off if you haven't quite reached the next save checkpoint and therefore have to replay a big chunk. An audio meter would make a great complement to the shadow gauge too. The three-stage alarm system is a decent stab at reducing the difficulty, though we'd like to see the alarms revert back one stage far quicker than they do at present. As luck would have it there's still time for tweaking. Originally on track for the end of March, the game has been delayed by a few months due to worryingly vague 'development issues', which might be a blessing in disguise. On the rare occasions that you can actually see what's going on without resorting to night vision, *Pandora Tomorrow* sure looks tasty. We'll let you know just how tasty in our full review very soon. Watch this space.

FIRST OPINIONS

Very similar to the first game in that there's a small number of missions which will take weeks to crack. And once you're done with them there's the potentially brilliant online multiplayer mode to test your mettle even more. Stealth has never been so hardcore.

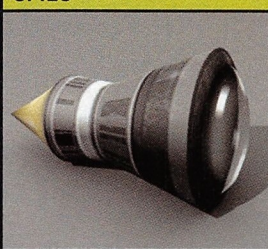
/ JONATHAN TODD

PLOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK PLOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK PLOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK PLOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK PLOT SPOILER DO NOT LOOK

CHOOSE YOUR WEAPON

THE MERCS AND SPIES ARE FIGHTING FOR CONTROL OF A VIRUS. HERE'S WHAT YOU'LL FIND IN THEIR KIT BAGS.

SPIES



STICKY CAMERA

A miniature camera with 360 degree pan and zoom, plus night and thermal vision modes. They're reusable too, so keep tabs on 'em.



FLASH GRENADE

Need to make a sharp exit? Toss one of these in the direction of an enemy and watch his blinded eyes weep as you leg it.



CHAFF GRENADE

Not quite as powerful or debilitating as the frag grenade, but another useful way of buying yourself some time.



SPY BULLET

Creep up behind a merc and hit him with one of these non-lethal bullets and you can trace his movement through the map.

MERCS



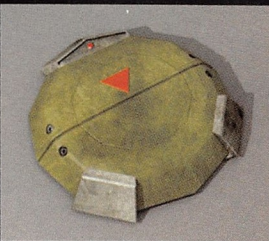
FRAG GRENADE

There are 6.5 ounces of high explosive in one of these, which is enough to kill or at least seriously wound anyone in range.



TAZER

A high voltage discharge that gives spies an incapacitating shock, and probably causes them to discharge something of their own.



PROXIMITY MINE

Attach one of these to almost any surface, lie in wait for a spy to approach and pull the trigger. Body parts everywhere. Brilliant.



SPY TRAP

Another mine, but this one can be attached to the ND133. It takes a few seconds to remove too, leaving spies vulnerable.

GameCube

Xbox

PC

Playstation 2

Game Boy Advance

PSP

**YOUR GUIDE TO THE
FUTURE OF GAMING
AND BEYOND!**

HYPER

AUSTRALIA'S GAMING AUTHORITY



>JUXTOPOSITION

Samanosuke and Jean Reno pose together, just like it's a real film poster. How clever is that?



“THE FINAL ONIMUSHA
INSTALMENT IS SHAPING
UP TO BE THE BEST.”

ONIMUSHA 3

BLOODLETING! SEXY BLONDES! EVIL DEMONS! DEAD FRENCHMEN!
CAPCOM PUSH ALL THE RIGHT BUTTONS WITH *ONIMUSHA 3*.

> GENRE	ACTION ADVENTURE
> DEVELOPER	CAPCOM
> PUBLISHER	CAPCOM
> OUT	SEPTEMBER
> ONLINE	NO

AS THE FIRST INTRO MOVIE OF ONIMUSHA 3

kicks off, it looks as though the twisted demon netherworld is going to achieve what England never could in centuries of warfare – the total and utter destruction of France, the ransacking of Gay Paris, and wholesale massacre of the French. You've got admit, as targets go, Nobunaga and his filthy demonic minions couldn't have chosen better.

Only one man appears to stand in the way of France's fall and it's none other than French film star Jean Reno. He's been drafted in to give a Western feel to the *Onimusha* series, playing the lead role of Jacques Blanc – a Harley-riding, gun-toting action hero. His only problem is that the leader of the unholy hordes, Nobunaga, has mastered the art of time travel, and his machinations have somehow warped Jacques back to the year 1582, where there's a shortage of ammunition for his sub-machine gun.

Does this mean that France is doomed? Of course not. In a kind of a video game version of the foreign exchange student programme, the hero of *Onimusha* games of yesteryear – Samanosuke – replaces Jacques in present day Paris. How? Well, the game kicks off with you in control of the perennial sword-slinger as he tracks down Nobunaga to his lair, hacks his way through a legion of demons and faces off against his arch-rival. But Nobunaga gets away – as he always does – bringing Samanosuke with him to present day France as Leno goes back to the future in Japan.

A NEW DIMENSION

Thus the scene is set for the latest instalment in Capcom's popular action adventure series. Past *Onimushas* have been glorious 2D affairs, but for *Onimusha 3* the game becomes fully 3D for the first time. This move to the third dimension could have gone disastrously wrong, because the first two games were breathtaking to behold anyway. The backgrounds might have been flat 2D but it didn't really matter because Capcom animated them all beautifully and introduced levels of interaction between the 3D characters and their surroundings that fully immersed you in the game. The only drawback was the static nature of the screen and the sometimes dodgy camera angles you were forced into using as a result.

Onimusha 3's full 3D backgrounds – which are based on Capcom's excellent *Devil May Cry* technology – do lack the absolute artistry of previous games, but at least the days of running about between flick-screen rooms with their bizarre perspectives have mercifully gone forever. Instead, the action now centres on you (rather than the backgrounds), making for a far more enjoyably paced and coherent adventure. What you lack in fine artistry is more than made up for with a superb sense of all-out action. And it has to be said that visually, the game packs far more of a punch than *Devil May Cry* or its lacklustre sequel. In fact, the addition of a third dimension has barely compromised the visual wonder of *Onimusha 3* at all.

The jump to the 21st century setting does jar somewhat when compared to the old games, but Capcom manages to weave together the time-switch activities of Samanosuke and Jacques Blanc fairly effectively. Basically, you swap between the two characters, with each taking on a level, defeating some kind of heinous beast at

JEAN RENO: THE MAN BEHIND THE LEGEND

AN ACTOR, A REAL ACTOR AND A GENUINE STAR! IN A VIDEO GAME.

In a brazen effort to improve sales in Europe and the US, Capcom has roped-in Hollywood actor Jean Reno to take part in *Onimusha 3*. This is the guy who played the eponymous professional killer in *Leon*, wound up Tom Cruise in *Mission: Impossible* and played Robert De Niro's mercenary buddy in *Ronin*. In *Onimusha 3*, he's called Jacques Blanc, and the good news is that you can 'be' him.



GUNISHMENT

Jacques starts out the game blowing away the hellspawn with his semi-automatic Uzi-like weapon. He needs to improvise somewhat once he's been sent back to ancient Japan though because ammunition is non-existent. Fun while it lasts though.



WHIPLASH

Once he's acclimatised to life in 16th century Japan, Jacques needs a decent weapon to attack his enemies with – enter the plasma whip. This piece of kit sorts out the undead in record time and sucks soul power just like Samanosake's gauntlet too.



ROPE-SWING

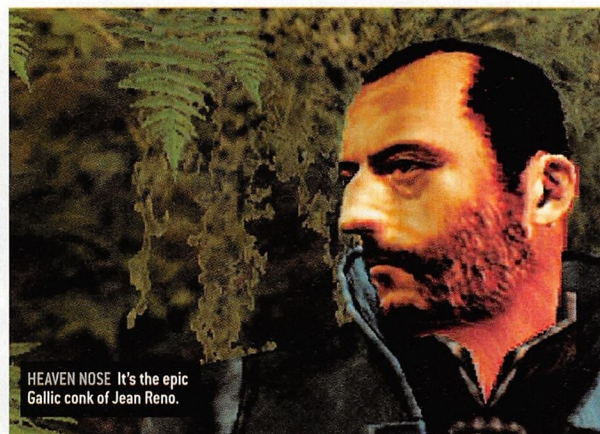
The plasma whip can be powered-up and replaced with other more devastating weapons, but all of Jacques's arsenal can latch onto special 'hooks' enabling him to swing over chasms and reach previously hidden parts of each level. Very useful.



BIG BOY There's no lack of gigantic boss nasties.



ENEMY SHRINE It's not all set in Paris, you know.



HEAVEN NOSE It's the epic Gallic conk of Jean Reno.



FIREMAN Even demons can't stand hot death-lava.



TWO'S COMPANY And you'll need all the help you get.



MR WHIPPY Jacques' whip is a useful and lethal tool.



PAST TIMES How will our Jacques find feudal Japan?



TAKE A BOW Traditional samurai weapons. Nice.



ONIMUSHA 3 FACT!

> SMACK MY BOT UP

Besides being the first *Onimusha* that's set in the present, it's also the first to feature mechanized enemies.

> THREE'S A CROWD

Don't expect a continuation of the *Onimusha 2* plot. There's no reference to Jubei, the hero of the second game.

> MONSTER MASH

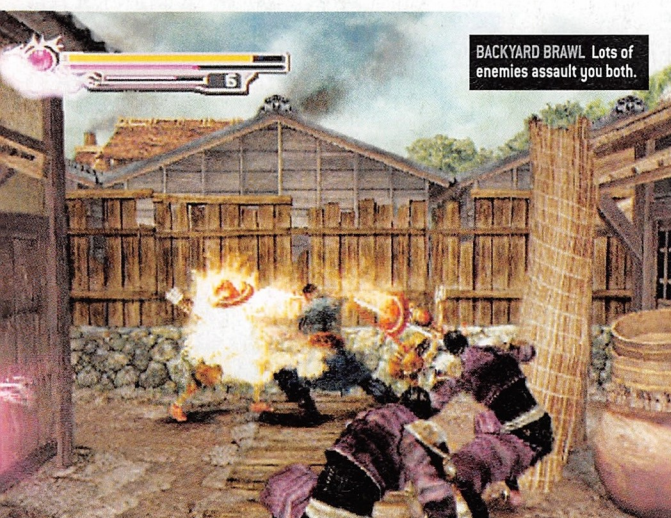
Not one, not two, but up to twenty enemies will assail the original odd couple on screen. Yowsers.

> TRAILER SMASH

The intro movie to *Onimusha 3* is the most impressive bit of computer imagery since *The Lord of the Rings*.



FLAY PARIS Usually, we get wrecked and Paris is fine.



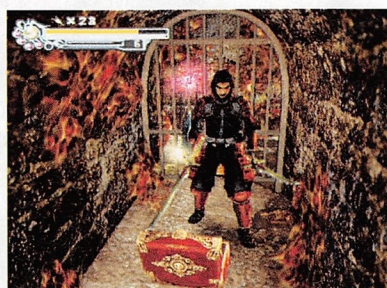
BACKYARD BRAWL Lots of enemies assault you both.



THAT'S GOTTA HURT Reno's character deals some pain.



LE BATTLE Use samurai skills and technology to defeat enemies.



FEELING HOT Search out soul treasure in some warm places.



ANGLE POISE Now the camera can move, it's easier to see.

the end before the story switches to the other character trapped in the other time period. Luckily, everyone in the game can speak fluent modern Japanese.

A TALE OF TWO TIMES

Now stick with us here, because this is all about to get extremely complicated, as most stories involving time travel do. Samanosake operates in this game in modern Paris, but there is another, younger version of the same man who meets up with Jacques early on in his adventure. Different armour, different comedy haircut, but it's the same guy – just from an earlier time in his life. The two characters actually team up for the duration (the computer controls the samurai) even though you are controlling the older version of Samanosake in some parts of the game.

In another brain-melting revelation, it seems that someone is transporting modern day consumer items (watches, even washing machines!) back into the past for some unknown reason. While Jacques is left in the past to figure out this particular puzzler, Samanosake is the man for the here and now – the frontline defence against Nobunaga's invasion schemes.

Adding to the general sense of confusion is the small, female, pixie-like creature (a kind of winged, Japanese Natalie Portman) who accompanies you on your journey and who has the ability to move through time as she sees fit. She accompanies you throughout the entire story, and provides the story-telling background as you flit from ancient Japan to modern day Paris. She can even carry small items from one time period to the other. You don't have any control over this as such though – it's just story-telling furniture. For example, when Jacques stumbles across his motorcycle in Japan the pixie quickly warps back to his apartment in Paris, swipes the keys, goes back and hands them over.

KEEPING IT SIMPLE

Suffice to say, that even if the complexities of time travel aren't your thing, the game effortlessly manages to navigate you through it, keeping things linear and uncomplicated. This allows you to enjoy the gun-toting, plasma-whip cracking activities of Jacques and the swordplay of Samanosake.

Just like previous *Onimusha* games and their *Resident Evil* cousins, there are puzzles to solve, but they tend to involve finding and relocating certain objects, or pulling levers. They aren't hugely taxing, although one or two may have you scratching your head.

It looks to us like the final instalment in the *Onimusha* saga is shaping up to be the best – whilst the core gameplay isn't that much improved over its predecessors, the level of polish and the sheer enjoyment to be gleaned from the game make this a title to get your teeth into even if you've never played the previous instalments.

FIRST OPINIONS

We've got the final Japanese version of the game here and you know what? It's bloody brilliant. It takes everything that was great about the last *Onimusha* games and combines it with the best of *Devil May Cry* – a stroke of genius. It's truly excellent and a fitting end to a worthy trilogy of fine games.

/ RICHARD LEADBETTER

WHAT THE MAKERS SAY

"ONIMUSHA 3 INTRODUCES NEWLY DESIGNED 3D POLYGONAL ENVIRONMENTS, MORE EXPANSIVE SETTINGS TO EXPLORE, A NEW DUAL HERO FIGHTING SYSTEM, ENHANCED GAMEPLAY AND MOTION PICTURE QUALITY CINEMATICS.."



LIGHT MY FIRE Try to set the night on fire.



NOTRE DAME? Well, it's definitely not St Paul's.



OUI MONSIEUR Leno shows us his moody French side.



ROBOT WARS Sam takes on Sir Killalot in the arena.

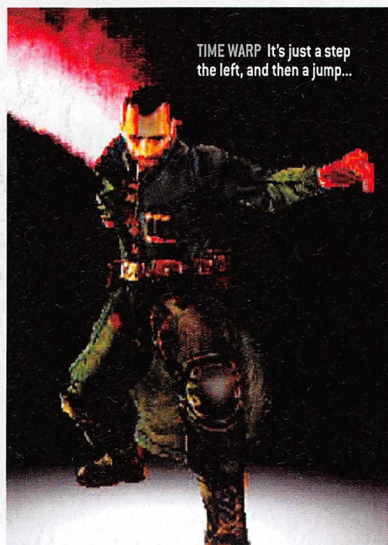
“YOU SWAP BETWEEN CHARACTERS WITH EACH TAKING ON A LEVEL BEFORE SWITCHING BACK.”



EAT LEAD SUCKERS! The samurais' katana blades are no match for Leno's Uzi.



WHO'S THE BOSS? Sam squares up to a big 'un.



TIME WARP It's just a step the left, and then a jump...



CRACK THE WHIP And send the bad guys to their grave.

HOW TO CREATE... ABSOLUTE MAYHEM!

POWER-UP YOUR WEAPONS AND UNLEASH HELL!

Killing the bad guys really is a very good idea. Not only does it stop them attacking you, but you can also suck the power out of their souls and use it against their comrades. A special power meter shows you how much of this energy you have, and once you let it loose the enemy don't stand a chance. An added bonus is the sheer visual splendour of this rampant destruction. The amount of damage, and the special effects used are all tied into the weapon you're using and how much it has been powered-up. Here's just a couple of the types of special attack on offer.



FIRE

Jacque's plasma whip unleashes fiery doom on all that get in his way – the pyrotechnics might look good in a screenshot, but wait until you see it move.



THUNDER

Samanosake's twin blades produce an outstanding on-screen lightshow, but the speed and brutality of the multiple strikes is what really does the damage.



HACK 'N' SLASH

Meet Samanosuke, *Onimusha*'s katana-wielding chief samurai. He'll lop off your head.

“LOVINGLY MADE AND STUFFED FULL OF ONIMUSHA-NESS.”

ONIMUSHA: BLADE WARRIORS

IT'S A SAMURAI BEATDOWN EXTRAVAGANZA OF *ONIMUSHA* PROPORTIONS. PREPARE THE SWORDS. AND THE STICKS. BUT LEAVE THE PUZZLES BEHIND.

> GENRE	FIGHTING
> DEVELOPER	CAPCOM
> PUBLISHER	CAPCOM
> OUT	SEPTEMBER
> ONLINE	NO

ALTHOUGH ONIMUSHA WAS ONCE BUT A NEW

take on the rules of the *Resident Evil* series, it has since grown to become a franchise in its own right. *Blade Warriors* is the first spin-off game from the *Onimusha* series and takes in characters from the two previous games as well as the forthcoming *Onimusha 3*. *Blade Warriors* is basically a distillation of the fighting from *Onimusha*, with the puzzling and adventuring taken out. Controls are broadly similar so far as combat is concerned, but thanks to the unique way that the levels are laid out, movement is all on the digital pad, which initially feels very strange. In Story mode, each character follows their own path through the game and although each quest is short, there are plenty of characters to take through, which extends the lifespan considerably.

Levels are arranged into three flat plains, set into the screen, so that the playing area is roughly equivalent to three *Street Fighter 2* arenas set back to back. Despite effectively being a 2D game, the graphics are all reasonably well-realised 3D. This does rather lead us to question why it couldn't have been either fully 2D or fully 3D. A compromise between the two adds all sorts of complications that ultimately leave us confused and unimpressed.

EIGHT FINGERED FREAKS

Moving between planes requires a double tap in the direction desired, into or out of the screen. When there's a change in elevation to match the change in plane, say leaping onto a rooftop or off a cliff face, then this is less confusing but when these planes are on flat ground it's often difficult to tell which plane you or your enemies are on. During big fights where you're already battling a multitude of many-limbed enemies, this plane switching quickly leads to confusion, bewilderment and, more often than not, death.

There's a broad selection of arenas to fight your way about, taking in all manner of traditional *Onimusha* locales; bamboo forests, pagodas, cliff faces and one delicious section on a boat. This last area appears to be a painting in the traditional Japanese style at first, until it starts moving. The rest of the bout then takes place in front of this hand-drawn backdrop. The effect is both highly original and quite stunning.

The selection of characters is similarly wide, and you're able to select combatants from all three *Onimusha* games, from either the forces of good or the forces of evil. Then there's the quirky secret character, who offers a completely different approach to combat (See Fact! panel).

If you're looking for more *Onimusha*, more back story, more of the characters and more of the look and feel of the *Onimusha* universe, then you'll be happy with what seems to be on offer here. But after you're after nothing a good beat 'em up, things will have to change more radically than we expect they actually will. In other words, unless you are an unabashed *Onimusha* fanboy, prepare to be a little underwhelmed.

FIRST OPINION

While lovingly made and stuffed full of *Onimusha*-ness, the controls are too vague and the design too contrived to offer the kind of easily accessible, rambunctious, four-player beat 'em up we were hoping for.

/ MARK SORRELL



ONIMUSHA: BLADE WARRIORS **FACT!**

> THAT'S MEGA

Mega Man will be available as an unlockable character for those who look hard enough.

> GETTING STRONGER

Players will level up as they progress through Story mode, making them a good deal stronger.

> ALL AROUND THE WORLD

There are a total of 16 combat arenas including a moving painting and a Mega Man-themed level.

> BUY ONE GET ONE FREE

If the game detects an *Onimusha 3* save on your PS2 card, you'll unlock an extra character to fight with.



NO PANDAS A lovingly rendered bamboo forest, sadly lacking in panda bears.



THE MONSTER MASH Just look at the size of that man. Demon. Whatever.



VERTIGO Some levels contain natural hazards.



SO BEAUTIFUL Gorgeous cherry blossom and death.



SHOWDOWN Your final foe is both deadly and familiar.



ROOFTOP DOWN Fights can take place anywhere.



DON'T GO CHASING This waterfall level is lovely.

YOU CAN'T STOP THE ROCK... MURDERING TONY HAWK

GAME HEROES FACE OFF IN THE SCRAPS WE'D LIKE TO SEE.



SAM FISHER VS DANTE

Who'd win between the shyest special ops agent in the world and gaming's most flamboyant hero? Our money's on the dude in black, surely able to pull off a stealth kill while the sword-carrying nonce does his hair.



COLIN McRAE VS TIGER WOODS

How do you beat a tall, athletic man carrying a golf club? Drive over him in a custom Ford Focus until his head goes flat. If Tiger hits back with a nine-iron, just reverse back over him a couple of times. That'll do it.



THE ROCK VS TONY HAWK

The Rock, as near as you get to a real life beat 'em up star. Fighting against Tony Hawk, a thin thirtysomething with a small wheeled board. Hmm, that's a tough one. We like Tony, but the Rock would kill him dead.



MEET THE ENEMY

See these guys? They don't mean well. In fact, they're evil. Yeah, and they look so nice...

"THIS IS THE DEFINITIVE
STAR WARS VIDEO GAME
EXPERIENCE."

STAR WARS: BATTLEFRONT

THERE'S NOT A JEDI IN SIGHT AS FOOT SOLDIERS FROM BOTH SIDES OF
THE GALACTIC STRUGGLE BATTLE IT OUT WITH BLASTERS AND VEHICLES.

> GENRE	SHOOTING
> DEVELOPER	LUCASARTS
> PUBLISHER	ACTIVISION
> OUT	OCTOBER
> ONLINE	YES

JUST THE SOUNDS OF THE STAR WARS

universe are enough to get us all in a tizzy. The scream of TIE Fighters, the fizz of blaster bolts and the biddy boo whoop bid diddy boo of R2D2. Sadly, the promises of *Star Wars* video games in recent times have, with very few exceptions, been revealed as nothing more than filthy lies. Nonetheless, the potential of a mass multiplayer shooting game where we all get to be the Stormtroopers remains as tempting as ever.

Adopting the lightsaber of justice, we dissected the meat of *Star Wars: Battlefront* and discovered it is one of those few games where all our "wouldn't it be great if..." fantasies seem to be coming true. The inclusion of no less than 15 different useable vehicle types — including AT-ATs, AT-STs, Speeder Bikes, SnowSpeeders, X-Wings and TIE Fighters — is genius. The choice of locations for your adventures is similarly impressive, with familiar *Star Wars* planets like Tatooine, Hoth, Endor and Naboo all figuring. The ability to play as Imperial or Rebel troops from the original trio of movies, as well as Clone and Republic troops from the prequels should please all comers, while having to adopt the position of a lowly grunt rather than some flashy Jedi hero will inject a rare sense of innovation and interest. It's all shaping up to provide a comprehensive experience. Well, almost.

KILL THEM, ALL OF THEM

The total absence of Jedi within the game will upset some but we can well understand how it might be somewhat detrimental to the gameplay. A massive bunch of lightsabered-up Jedi badasses smashing each other to bits would be a fearsome sight but it might unbalance matters somewhat. Take solace instead from the totally unscripted gameplay, where every encounter plays out differently, and your decisions have an immediate and realistic impact on the battlefield action. No more waiting for that soldier (you know, the one with the hat) to come round the corner he always comes round — this is about reacting to intelligent enemies as they react to you. Anyone who's experienced *Halo's* organic battles on Xbox or PC will appreciate just how much this can add to a game. It gives you a genuine feeling of being there.

The biggest surprise though, is the size of the multiplayer battles. Up to 16 players will be able to duke it out online, but with a LAN set up that number will rise to a truly epic 32. The chances of getting 32 televisions together at one time are as slim as a sheet of paper but 16 players should still be enough to make for some truly huge battles. The sheer scale of things demonstrates LucasArts' commitment to making this the definitive *Star Wars* video game experience. Despite the atrocious track record of *Star Wars* games, the amount of detail, thought and innovation going into this title is almost enough to make us believe this could be something a bit special. Here's hoping.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

A genuinely interesting and fresh game based around the greatest license of them all can't be a bad thing. Despite having our reservations, this could well turn out to be something really quite special. Keep your eyes on *PSW* for the full story as it unfolds.

/ MARK SORRELL

STAR WARS: BATTLEFRONT **FACT!**

> IT'S THE PITS

Unique features will include the Sarlac pit on Tatooine. Digested for a thousand years? Nasty.

> NO DISINTEGRATIONS

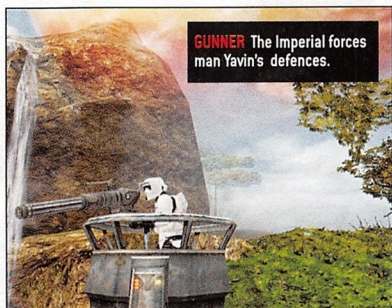
Everyone's favorite Dark Lord of the Sith, Darth Vader is reputed to make an appearance during the game.

> RISK

Your victory or defeat in one battle will have an effect on the overall outcome of the war.

> TOO HOT TO HANDLE

All the large scale battles from the films will be available for play in the finished game.



GUNNER The Imperial forces man Yavin's defences.



REBEL SCUM It's a huge explosion for a tiny gun.



TIE-D OF WAR This TIE pilot misses his steed.



STORMTROOPERS Find out if those uniforms chaff.



DARTH SOLID Sneaking about yeilds results.



REBEL YELL Or in this case, a new rebel base on Endor.



WHAT EWOKS? The forest battles make use of cover.

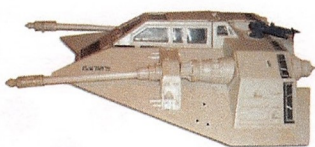


PRINCESS LEIA Which SW characters will be included?

EASY AS FALLING OFF A BANTHA

A GUIDE TO THE VEHICLES YOU'LL BE COMMANDEERING IN BATTLEFRONT.

SNOW SPEEDER



Modified T-47 airspeeders pressed into service for the Rebels. Ideal for patrol and defence duties. Fitted with twin laser cannons at the front and a harpoon gun at the rear, this two-man vehicle can also provide excellent support to ground troops.

SWOOP BIKE

These Aratech manufactured bikes provide cheap and easily maintained transport to all; from poor moisture farmers on Tatooine to Imperial Troops on Endor. A ubiquitous everyman, utilitarian vehicle; fast efficient and effective. Imperial version comes with a single laser cannon slung underneath.



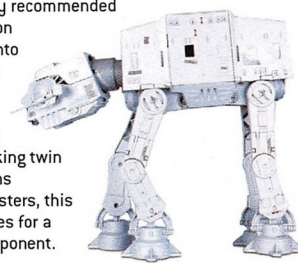
X-WING FIGHTER

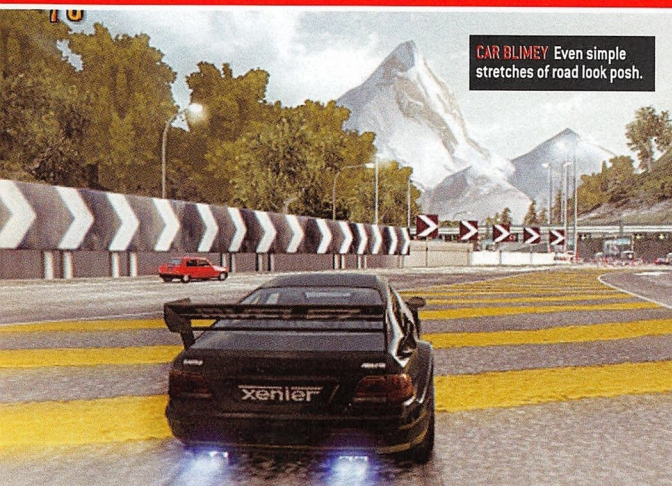


The Incom T-65 X-Wing Starfighter is the most recognisable symbol of the Rebellion's fight against the Empire. Packing four laser cannons supplemented with photon torpedoes, the X-Wing is a fast, nimble and very rugged assault vehicle. R2 units can help navigate.

AT-AT

The All Terrain Armoured Transport is manufactured by Kuat Drive Yards and comes highly recommended for insertion operations into inhospitable terrain. Standing 15.5 metres tall and packing twin laser cannons and twin blasters, this vehicle makes for a fearsome opponent.





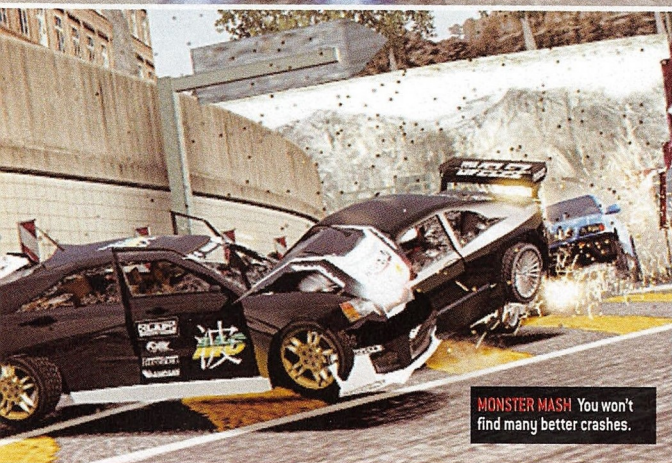
CAR BLIMEY Even simple stretches of road look posh.



RIDING BAREBACK A classic takedown manoeuvre. Nice.



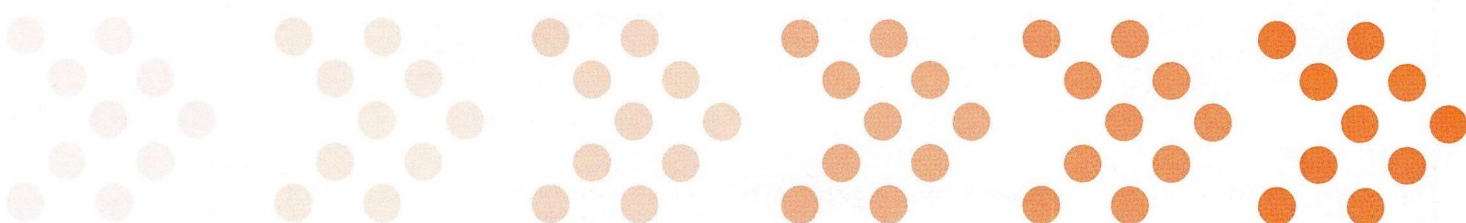
GREEN VAN MAN No real cars, but magical physics.

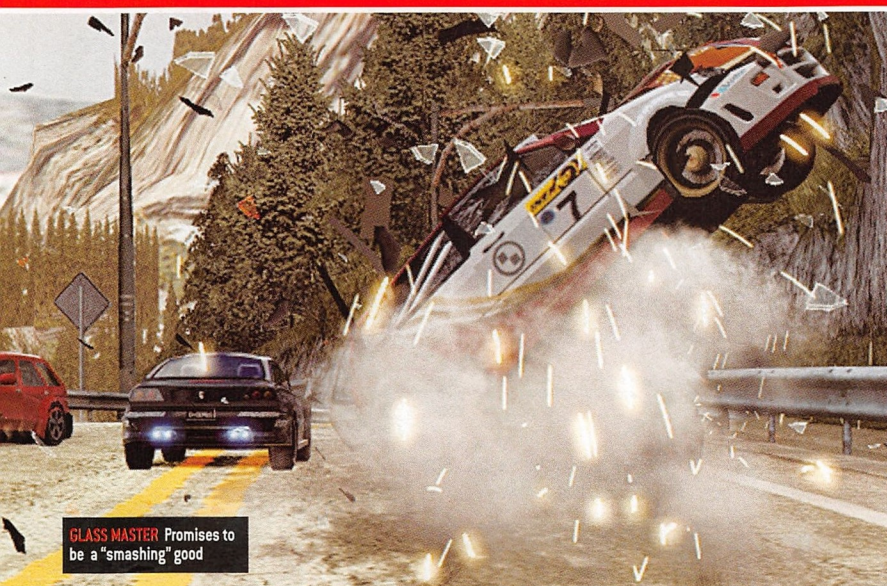


MONSTER MASH You won't find many better crashes.



CHECK THIS OUT It happens about 50 times per game.





> GENRE	DRIVING
> DEVELOPER	CRITERION
> PUBLISHER	EA
> OUT	SEPTEMBER
> ONLINE	YES

BURNOUT 3

WE KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING: IS IT ONLINE? DOES IT LOOK BETTER? IS IT ANY FASTER? FOR THE FIRST TIME IN PSW, HERE'S EVERYTHING YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT *BURNOUT 3*.

YOU CAN'T IMPROVE ON PERFECTION. ONCE A GAME GETS IT RIGHT, ALL YOU CAN DO IS produce more and more iterations with subtle tweaks to try and wring the last tiny extra bit of fun out of it. Look no further than *Pro Evolution Soccer*, *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater*, *Final Fantasy* and a whole load more of our favourite PS2 titles for the evidence. *Burnout 3* though, is doing something a bit different and not a little bit naughty – it's hoping to reinvent the series that made us really care about arcade racing once more. And it's actually, honestly making it work. We've played *Burnout 3* to death a full six months before it's due to hit the shelves, and now we're going to tell you how and why it'll be the best arcade racer on PS2, bar absolutely none.

CRASH AND BURN

Burnout rekindled the thrill of arcade driving by being a game that only let you drive faster if you drove more dangerously. Driving on the wrong side of the road, narrowly missing oncoming vehicles, pulling off massive powerslides – they all combined to give you more boost power. It was the best thing since sliced genius, and *Burnout 2* improved every aspect of the experience with meatier crashes and more game modes.



TURN AGAIN Don't just drive round corners – powerslide!



HOLY CRAP! Get used to this sort of thing happening.



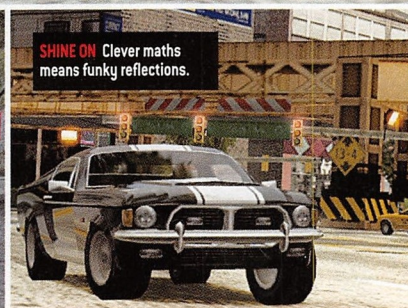
BLUE STREAK This means you're about to burnout.



HOLY HELL Just wait till you see it in action. It's mental.



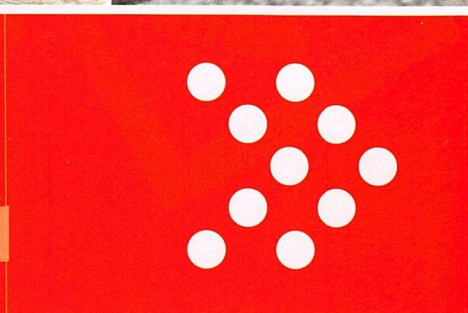
STEADY ON Weaving not driving – the *Burnout* way.



SHINE ON Clever maths means funky reflections.



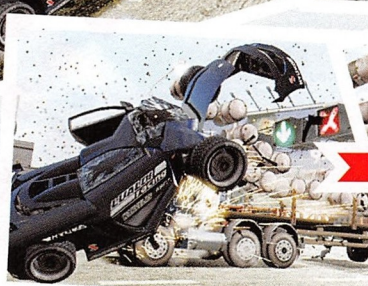
OH LORDY You'll wet your pants when you see it move.



GREAT CRASHES OF OUR TIME #1



JUST WATCH THE BODYWORK FLY OFF THIS SPORTY RACER...



Sure, *Burnout 3* does everything you'd expect. There are now six rival cars on the track instead of four. The car and track graphics have been stripped down and rebuilt with added bling. The number of cars to unlock has been trebled... yada, yada, yada. But that's not what *Burnout 3* is really about. The biggest, fattest, most important new add-on is this: when you're racing, it's now utterly imperative that you smash the other cars up in order to win. This may sound like heresy to all the true-bred *Burnout* lovers out there, although it formed a small part of the previous game. Let us assure you that it's not. It's the funnest thing since *Burnout* invented high speed car dodging in the first place. It'll have you grinning like the proverbial cat in single-player mode, and online with five other drivers, it becomes a rollicking, breathtaking salvo of fun fired right between your eyes.

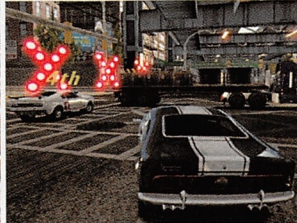
We're not talking about nudging rivals to reduce some sort of energy bar here. Nothing as boring and pedestrian as that. Bump alongside a car, and you'll produce a huge stream of sparks and a horrible crunching sound that sounds like Truckasaurus having eleventhens. Hit an opponent hard enough from any angle, even from right behind, and you'll trigger a 'takedown' – a full-bodied, giant crash which pauses the action for a second so that you can watch your rival spin out of control, probably up into the air or right into the path of a semi, and into a thousand pieces. They fall back behind in the race, you get the advantage. This isn't something that happens once in a race. This is a regular occurrence all around the circuit. At top speed, right at the start of a drive, just as you're approaching the finishing line – a good takedown can alter the whole race and put you suddenly in first place. Likewise, you can be happily whooshing round the track in pole when a car dashes up from behind and causes you to flip thirty feet into the sky before resuming the race in last place. If you manage to smash up the offender you'll get a message proclaiming 'takedown avenged!'



BRIGHT SPARKS Whenever we touch, it's electric...



MAD DETAIL. Simple crashes are so last decade, baby.

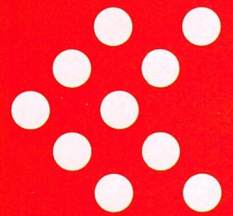


STEAMY STUFF Car models get fully bent out of shape.



CRYING SHAME To bust up such a beautiful automobile.

"IT'S THE FUNNEST THING SINCE *BURNOUT* INVENTED HIGH-SPEED CAR DODGING."



There's nothing sweeter. Somehow, it's still possible to knock out a rival car while you're both travelling at 120mph with traffic screaming past. It's just how arcade racing should be: completely overblown but totally exhilarating.

YOU'LL GET BY ON YOUR LOOKS

This is where we'll put our credibility on the line and say that *Burnout 3* is the best looking arcade racer ever. Slap this quote on the game box and put it in Electronics Boutique if you like. Because it's true. *Burnout 3* really is the best looking arcade racer ever. Not just on PS2 either, because it beats anything on Xbox. Yes, even the oft-praised *Project Gotham Racing 2*. In fact, when we saw *Burnout 3*, the PS2 version was even trouncing its own Xbox version. In fact if

it wasn't for the upcoming *Gran Turismo 4*, we'd probably feel comfortable stating: "*Burnout 3* is the best looking racer ever!"

For a start, they've spent an absolutely ludicrous amount of time improving the crashes. You could be forgiven for thinking that *Burnout's* crashes were the last thing that needed any work. After all, they're what define the series. *Burnout* was the first game to make crashing a good thing, by showing you the carnage and even giving it a rating based on the damage done in dollars. All well and good, and *Burnout 2* refined the mix to make prangs and pile-ups even more eye-popping and heartbeat skipping.

So in the days of yore, you may well have seen a crash in *Burnout 1* or *2* and muttered something like: "My goodness. That was indeed a

>

CRASH THE PARTY!

CRASH MODE'S BACK, AND IT'S NOT MESSING AROUND!



OOOF!

Ramming your car into another car – it's what *Burnout 3* is all about. The faster and harder you do it, the more damage you'll do.



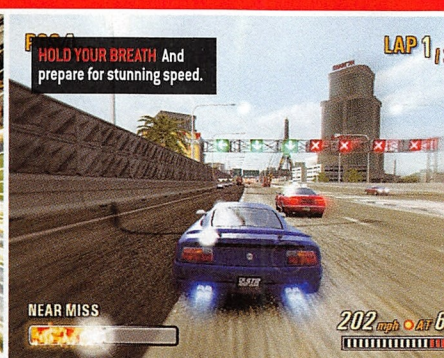
WAAAH!

Score more damage by aiming for big, heavy truck-like things. Did we mention trucks are a big part of the game?



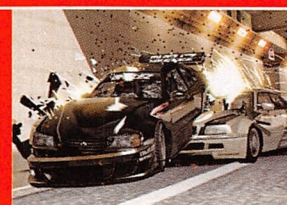
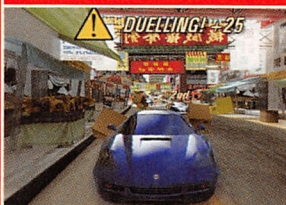
OUCH!

Of course, the more vehicles you crash into, the more damage you'll do. And the more dollars you'll rack up. That's life!



TAKEDOWN!

HOW TO DESTROY THE OPPOSITION, BURNOUT 3 STYLE.



You'll get extra boost points for harassing rival cars. Bear in mind that your boost limit can also be increased by fancy driving, leading to incredibly long boost sessions.

Start by viciously shunting your opponent into the side of the road to slow them down. This will give you the chance to get in there and knock them out.

Smash hard enough and they'll fly into the air and land with a soul-shaking crash – it's the classic 'takedown' and it's satisfying as hell. One of the simple joys of *Burnout 3*!

Watch out, though – rival cars can come back, creep up on you and knock you out to avenge their takedown shame. In multiplayer, this leads to no end of vicious grudges.

satisfactory collision between two video game cars. I am suitably impressed." But when you see a crash in *Burnout 3*, you don't say anything. You win. Then the next time you see a crash, you go "Oooh!". Not in an 'I've-just-seen-a-fluffy-bunny' kind of way. More like the way that you'd go "Oooh!" if you'd just watched a grown man hammer a nail through one of his own testicles. Because what you're seeing doesn't really look, sound or feel like a complex physics simulation between two computer-modelled vehicles. It looks like a car crash. More specifically, a car crash in a Jerry Bruckheimer-bankrolled John Woo racing film with a massive budget specifically set aside for spectacular explosions and accidents. It's not really about frame rates, polygon counts or any of that other technical bollocks. It's simply about trying to make it look like real life. Or at least, the movie version of real life, where nobody dies from not wearing a seatbelt.

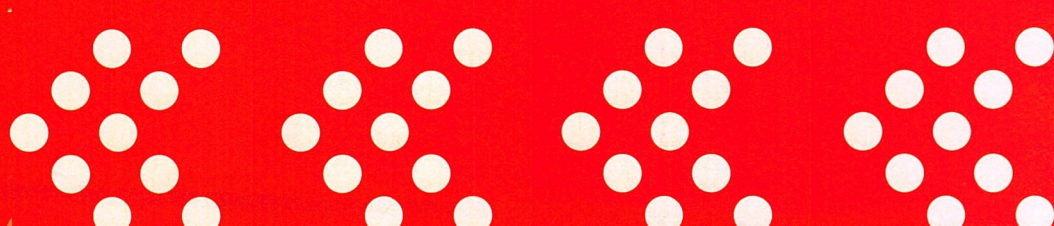
Every time metal is wrenched out of place, a fountain of glowing sparks flies up, lighting up the surrounding wreck. Then there are the showers of glass, the tiny particles of bodywork, the metallic fragments; all flying off at super speed. If all this excites you in any way, then you need to know about *Burnout 3*'s answer to *Max Payne*'s 'bullet time'. Hold down the R1 button just like in *Driv3r* and the crash miraculously slows down to a crawl. You can actually see the individual shards of glass sail through the air as a windscreen is shattered. Sounds distort to a bass rumble, sparks become white-hot lines in the air, and you can watch as

the cars are slo-o-owly bent out of shape. Take your finger off R1 and suddenly the action zooms back into real time, exploding onto your screen with a yowl of metal on metal and a riot of car parts. To help matters the camera is adept at spotting the best angle to show the carnage from, expertly panning round and zooming in to show off every collision.

CAN'T STOP MOVIN'

The way the PS2-controlled cars act has also been tweaked. Criterion claims to have made other cars 'lose control' to make things more lifelike. We have a sneaking suspicion, despite plenty of denials, that what this means is they've cunningly made it so that approaching cars are more likely to crash into your wreckage than steer around it or stop in time. Either way, almost every scrape ends up becoming a giant scrap-orgy as car after car smacks into your vehicle. Surely it's no accident that the shoulder button is the same one you use to boost with – the game is actively encouraging you to slow everything down to a crawl, to see just how amazing it all is.

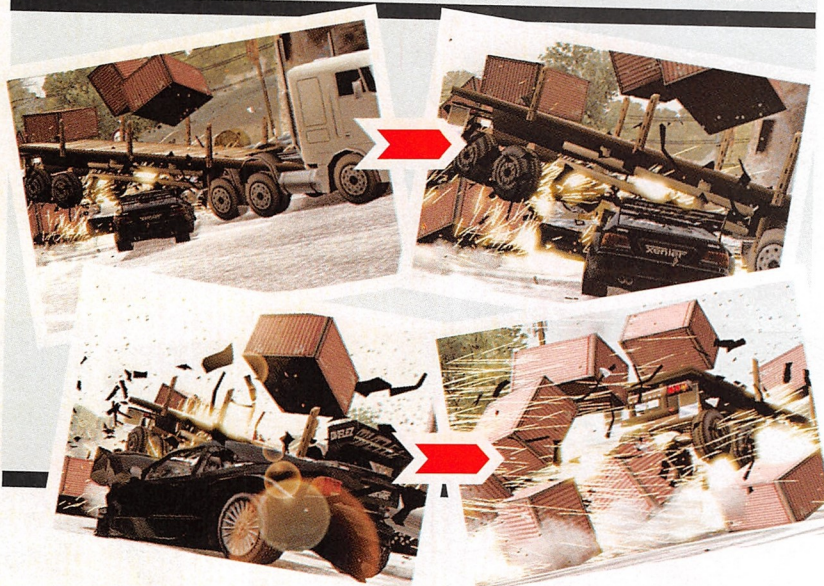
Best of all, it makes no difference to your race time whether you continue to play or linger over the slow-motion crash for as long as you like. You'll still come back into the action, miraculously undamaged, in the same position whatever you do. Obviously, you won't be able to slow down time in multiplayer though, or everyone would have to pause their game to wait.



GREAT CRASHES OF OUR TIME #2



WATCH THE SPARKS AND CRATES FLY IN THIS MASSIVE IMPACT.

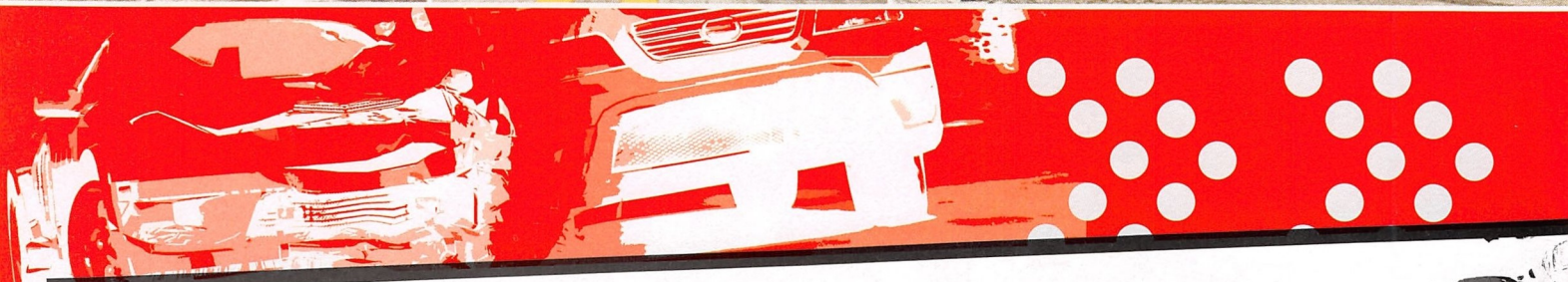
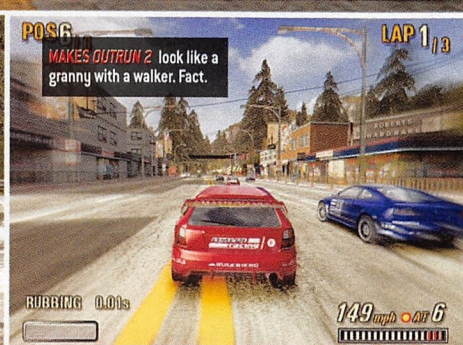
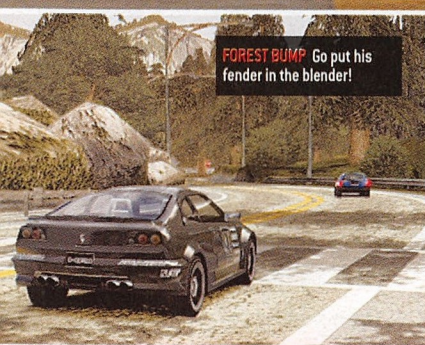
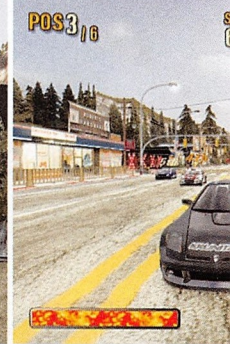


Other new tweaks affect the gameplay. For example, whereas you used to come to a stop when you hit the side of the road, now even the slightest little connection with the roadside will spring your car up into the air like Satan threw you up there himself. Go head-on with a truck, and you can watch as the giant vehicle jack-knives, spilling its cargo of crates or bales all over passing cars. Hang around, and you're bound to see more hapless cars adding to the chaos. In fact, we were vaguely disappointed when the crash scene ended and we were forced back into the action.

We suspect that the environments you race through have all been totally reinvented as well, but they were going too fast for us to see properly. We got a sense of a few of them, though. Insane oriental streets covered in lanterns, breakable roadside stalls, mad amounts of clutter and, of course, a whole load of traffic. Mountainous regions, more of those trademarked coastal roads. Although unnamed, most of the places in *Burnout 3* are modelled on real life roads and places. As well as US destinations there's a few Asian and even European look-alikes included. It's a much-needed burst of diversity for the series... but where's Sydney?

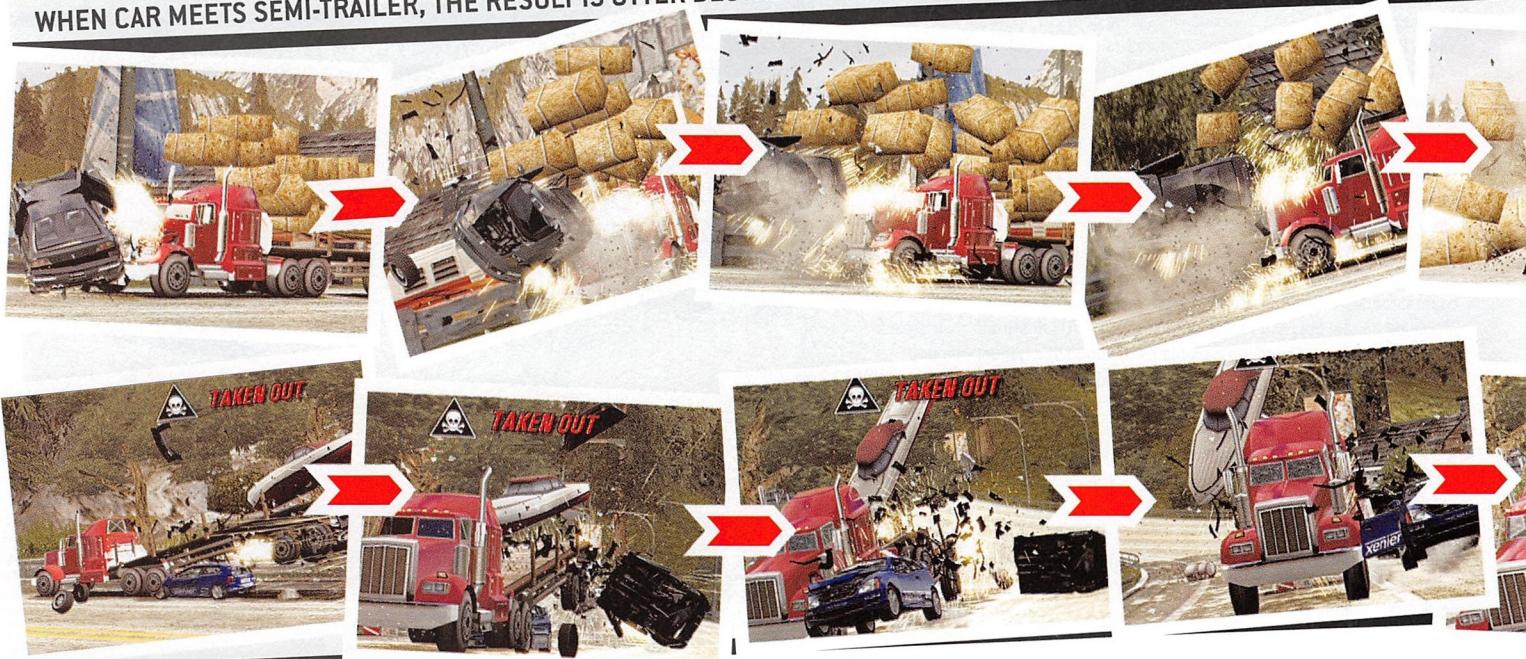
RACE OF CHAMPIONS

Throw all this attention to detail together and you've got one hell of a looker. *Gran Turismo 4* sits quietly on its throne, secure in the knowledge of its utter supremacy in looks. But *Burnout 3* dances around and waves its sizeable graphical package in your face, making you sit up and take notice. Possibly because it runs twice as fast as most games, updating the screen 60 times a second. Bear with us here, because we don't usually go into this kind of bearded, dungarees-wearing technical detail, but it's essential here. Because you have so little time to react when a car speeds



GREAT CRASHES OF OUR TIME #3

WHEN CAR MEETS SEMI-TRAILER, THE RESULT IS UTTER DESTRUCTION.





“BURNOUT 3 ENCOURAGES YOU TO SLOW THINGS DOWN, JUST TO SEE HOW AMAZING IT ALL LOOKS.”

past, you need every one of those 60 frames a second to see it. At top speed, the space between first seeing a car on the horizon and narrowly avoiding it is much, much smaller than a second. On slower games, it's unlikely that you'd be able to see the car at all. Yes, *Burnout 3* really is that fast.

One reason is that Criterion are not only responsible for making the *Burnout* games, they've also created Renderware, a one-size-fits-all software engine that makes the graphics for a whole load of games like *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3*, *Pro Evolution Soccer 2* and even *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City*. This is not to say that *Burnout 3* looks anything like these games, despite running on Renderware too – it looks a thousand times better.

CRASHING THE NET

Thanks to a partnership with the giant, world-eating publisher Electronic Arts, *Burnout 3* boasts some exhaustive online features too. The aim is to make driving online feel every bit as fast and exhilarating as driving on your own, so just like in single-player mode you'll be able to race against five other cars, all player-controlled. Many online games, even the best ones, cut back on single-player features to get everything running smoothly. In *Burnout*, you might expect this to mean getting rid of all PS2-controlled traffic. After all, how could six PS2s playing together possibly co-ordinate every car on a massive course? Except somehow, they've done it. By some miracle of computer-magic, Criterion has managed to cram in every last bit of traffic into the multiplayer game too. In gameplay terms, this means that if the lead racer snarls up and kisses bumpers with a car going the other way, you'll see his chassis flying overhead as you steer out of the way of the carnage and take first place. It means you'll still need every ounce of

skill to build up your boost meter by driving on the wrong side of the road. It means pile-ups with, potentially, all six players involved. It's nothing less than astounding to play, and we wish that we could let you have a go right now. With this and *Gran Turismo 4* going online, you might just have a proper reason to get a broadband adapter.

So what's not in *Burnout 3*? A couple of things. Firstly, they've removed the police chase game that everyone loved, where one of you is a cop and one's a crim. Doesn't really fit in with the whole *Burnout* theme of carefree racing, apparently. And you won't be able to talk to each other while you're racing online, although you will be able to in the lobby before racing starts. This is really a shame, because we can't think of another driving title that would provide more opportunity for crowing at, laughing with, or insulting other players. But moaning about these things it a bit like complaining that your girlfriend Jennifer Lopez hasn't cut her toenails.

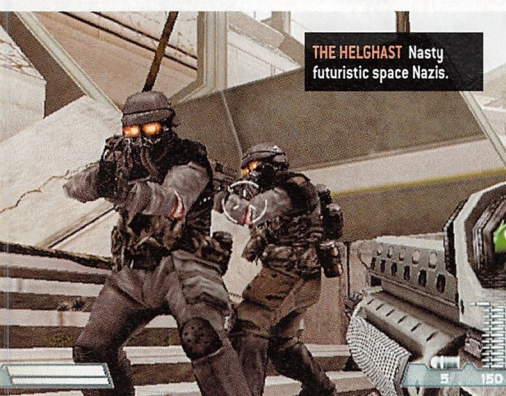
All this and there's still six months to go before the game's finished. Criterion wouldn't let us put the jaw-dropping stuff we've seen so far onto our DVD, claiming it would deliver a less-than-perfect idea of what the game's like. It's okay though, they've said we can bring you the first look at *Burnout 3* soon and before anyone else, naturally. There's still a wealth of huge, beautiful explosions to come, not to mention tons more cars and modes. Suddenly, September seems very far away, doesn't it?

FIRST OPINIONS

It's still *Burnout*. If you hated *Burnout*, you might not get drawn in. But if you loved *Burnout*, or even if you kind of liked *Burnout*, then this is the game for you. We'll bring you the full review soon, so stay tuned.

/ JOFF BROWN





THE HELGHAST Nasty futuristic space Nazis.



TOAST The only good Helghast is a dead one.



UP CLOSE Those beady orange eyes are pure evil.

IN THE ZONE

CONTINUING OUR IN-DEPTH *KILLZONE* COVERAGE, HERE'S ALL THE LATEST TOP SECRET MILITARY INTELLIGENCE FROM THE MAKERS OF THE FLAGSHIP SHOOTER. NEED TO KNOW ONLY!

MEET MARTIN DE RONDE, COMMERCIAL DIRECTOR OF GUERRILLA. READ ON AS WE TRY TO PUMP HIM FOR INFO. REMEMBER TO CHEER WHEN HE REVEALS SECRETS!



>>We now know that you don't just play as the one character all the way through *Killzone*. What can you tell us about the other characters you take control of?

You start the game as Templar and he's a good all-round character. During the opening levels of the game you'll encounter, and in some cases rescue other characters. Once a character has joined your group, you can then choose to play as that character. Luger is a female stealth/assassin character. She's an expert with knives and silenced weapons. She's also very agile and is able to access areas of the levels that the other characters can't reach. Rico is the heavy weapons expert; he's like a

human tank and boasts amazing firepower. The weight of his weapons mean that he's by far the slowest character though. He's able to blast his way through certain areas that wouldn't normally be accessible. We're saving details of the 4th character to be a surprise for later on.

The different characters have different skills and weapons that allow them to tackle each level in very different ways. The different characters will be able to take different routes through certain areas. Because each character has his or her own levels of strength and stamina, certain weapons will be almost useless in the hands of certain characters. Therefore, you'll need to plan your route, playing technique and weapon choice carefully, depending on who you are playing as.

>>We've been, quite literally, blown away by the amazing choice of weapons in the game. But they did strike us as a bit retro-looking. Why aren't there any laser-guns?

Despite the game being set in the near future, the weapons have a very traditional feel. Technology is

changing the face of traditional warfare and bullets are being replaced with lasers and computer-guided missiles. We decided to go back to conventional weapons though, in order to put the player in control and generate that nitty-gritty feeling of traditional warfare. There are more than 20 weapons in total that you can pick up and play over the course of the game.

>>You appear to have taken a lot of inspiration from World War II and the Vietnam conflict. Wouldn't you have been better off looking to the future?

When we were asked by Sony to develop a game for PlayStation2, we knew immediately that we wanted to make a first-person shooter. Our designers researched the genre by reading war books and military manuals and watching war movies and documentaries. *Killzone* has plenty of fresh new ideas to build upon, but it also takes inspiration from the scale and drama from the great twentieth-century conflicts. By creating our own war and our own universe we were able to take inspiration >

NUMBER ONE WITH A BULLET

THE THREE BIGGEST, NASTIEST STATIONARY
GUNS IN KILLZONE LOCKED AND LOADED.

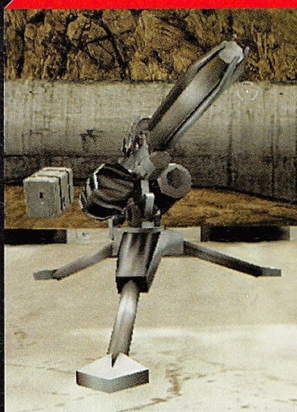


LONG DISTANCE STATIONARY MACHINE GUN

If you're trying to make a killer strike to a specific target, you're going to need something like this. Its long barrel and high level of accuracy make it perfect for taking out lightly-armoured flying vehicles. Take care though because it's bolted to the spot. It takes a few seconds to disengage from the weapon, meaning you're an easy target.

HEAVY DUTY QUADRUPLE- BARREL ASSAULT TURRET

Oh. My. God! You have to see this beast of a blaster in action. Like some kind of immovable tank turret, you have to climb inside before unleashing torrents of molten destruction on your enemies. Keeps firing long after you take your fingers off the trigger, just to remind you who's the boss. This gun is our god and we'll be asking Santa for one.



STATIONARY LIGHT ASSAULT WEAPON

The quickest to operate of the three guns here, the biggest danger with the light assault weapon is that you'll be spotted from afar and taken out before it can inflict any significant damage. A single barrel means it's ideal for taking out individual enemies, but since there's no zoom facility you may end up spunking bullets needlessly.



from these dramatic situations without being constrained to one historical representation of a specific period in time. In other words, by setting the game in its own universe we are free to add our own twists and surprises to what appear to be familiar situations.

>> Besides those two aforementioned conflicts, were there any other films or books that inspired your development team?

The list is endless! The designers drew inspiration from war movies, sci-fi movies, military costumes, history books and even close-combat manoeuvre manuals. I think it's fair to say that movies such as *Black Hawk Down* and *Saving Private Ryan* were strong reference points, but the sagging bookshelves in our design room show just how much printed reference material was also used to give the game its authentic atmosphere.

Do you foresee any problems with the violent nature of the game, given that it's so realistic?

We're concentrating on completing the game and making it the best it can be. Our colleagues at Sony Europe have experts in each territory who are well placed to advise us

**"WE SPENT A LOT OF TIME RESEARCHING
WEAPONS FOR THE GAME AND WE THINK THE
RESULTING GUNS WILL BE REALLY SATISFYING."**

if we need to make any changes to comply with the local laws of these countries.

We're used to developers making all sorts of extravagant promises about the intelligence of the PS2-controlled enemies. What does *Killzone* promise in this respect?

We believe that excellent artificial intelligence is an essential ingredient of any truly absorbing, believable first-person shooter. This is a challenge to build, and it takes a great deal of patience and tweaking to get the correct balance.

In terms of decision-making, every PS2-controlled character is configured to have traits that influence the way they behave and the decisions they make. Some may be overly confident, others are more careful. PS2-controlled characters can analyse the terrain and the combat situation very well, and can autonomously make tactical decisions based on what they see. For example, an enemy soldier who's spotted a player can, when the player takes cover, move to a new position that provides cover for them and lay down suppressive fire on points where they think the player might re-emerge.

Cooperation plays a large part in enemy intelligence. Enemies are typically encountered in squads, in keeping with the military setting of the game. The squad will work together to perform manoeuvres, communicate threats, distribute sectors of responsibility and take into account squad spread and formation when moving and positioning. The benefit is that the enemy becomes more than just a collection of individuals doing their thing; you are up

against soldiers who work as a team.

The command system explicitly models the communication within a real-life squad with the squad leader issuing orders such as 'move to position', 'start covering fire' and so on, while the other squad members will acknowledge these and provide feedback back to the leader. This includes the spotting of enemies, or reporting when a squad member is down etcetera.

Can players command their own squad control, or will they simply have to sit back and watch powerless as their team charges mindlessly into the enemy guns?

Your three team mates are always controlled by the PS2. We want the player to concentrate on his or her own survival – they shouldn't feel that they have to baby-sit their own squad members as well. The squad members are there to make you feel that you're operating as part of a military unit, rather than an unrealistic lone warrior. They will offer you protective firepower in certain dangerous situations, but they certainly won't spoil your fun or take out enemy soldiers for you while you sit back and watch.

For the most part, your squad members can't be killed by the enemy, but they will drop back if injured, thereby giving you less support and making you more vulnerable to attack. As you need to complete the game with all your squad members alive, we felt it would be unfair if the player failed due because of a squad member's mistakes.

There will, however, be levels where your objective is to protect or escort a squad member who may be



KNOCK! KNOCK! Hallo! Ich bin ein Orange Eyed Nazi!



PINCER MOVE Sneak up behind the Helghast and shoot 'em in the back.



GRUNT Although you won't be able to control your squad, they'll still help.

unarmed, or in possession of a vital item. During these missions your objective is to keep the other character alive. The character can be killed if you fail to protect him or her sufficiently.

The early version of *Killzone* we've been playing has a shooting range feature. Is this something you created purely to show off the weapons, or will it have a place in the finished game?

We initially created the shooting gallery as a development tool, so that we could tweak and adjust the characteristics of the different weapons and compare them easily. However, this feature has proved so popular with everyone who's seen it that we're thinking about finding a way to add it in as an additional feature.

One of the things that really stands out is the level of attention to detail. Was this always a priority for the development team?

The core members of the team that have been with Guerrilla from the start have always had a strong vision for the game and have guarded their ideas very closely. Attention to detail has always been high on their list of priorities, as it makes the game a much richer experience. As development has progressed, the team has expanded to more than 30 people and when recruiting we have been careful to select the most talented people with the same high standards.

We've seldom – if ever – seen PS2 characters as detailed as they are in *Killzone*. How have you made them so life-like, and how did you manage to capture the level of facial detail characters display?

We're using a unique multi-layer texturing system which allows us to show off an enormous level of detail at close range. This draws multiple layers of tiny textures one on top of the other. For items that are in the foreground you see the full extent of the detailed

textures. Items further away don't need to draw in all the layers as those items are less visible. This allows us to make the most of the PS2 memory.

Why was the music for *Killzone* recorded by the Moscow Symphony Orchestra? Why not get some techno hack to knock you up some generic urban beats?

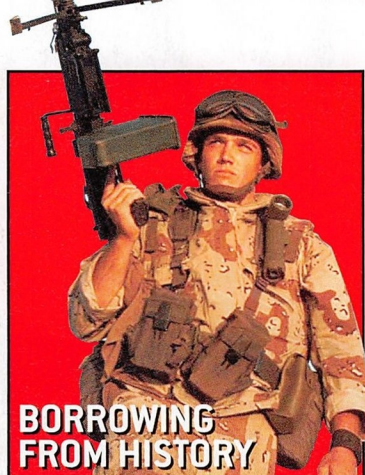
The placeholder *Killzone* music we are using at the moment was recorded in Moscow, but this is only a tiny part of the soundtrack and was a test recording to see how much better orchestral music sounded than midi. Our composer is busy writing more tracks right now. Another orchestra will record the full soundtrack later this year.

The phrase we keep hearing in connection with *Killzone* is 'Halo beater'. Is this comparison with the classic Xbox shooter really justified?

Work on *Killzone* actually started before *Halo* was released. Our aim was to design and develop a first-person shooter specifically for PlayStation2 drawing on all the previously untapped power the console has to offer. In the course of our research we have drawn inspiration from a number of other games, films and books and the resulting game is very much an original title. With *Halo* considered the benchmark first-person shooter at this present moment in time, we realise that certain comparisons are somewhat inevitable. While we're flattered by the comparison, *Killzone* is very much its own game, with original characters and imaginative squad-based elements.

It has been recently revealed that you're working on the Vietnam shooter *Shellshock: Nam '67*. Are there any plans for a *Killzone* sequel yet?

We have heaps of ideas for new games that we would love to explore further, but at the moment we're just concentrating on finishing *Killzone* and making it the best it can be.



BORROWING FROM HISTORY

WHAT EXACTLY HAS *KILLZONE* TAKEN FROM THE REAL-LIFE CONFLICTS OF YESTERYEAR?



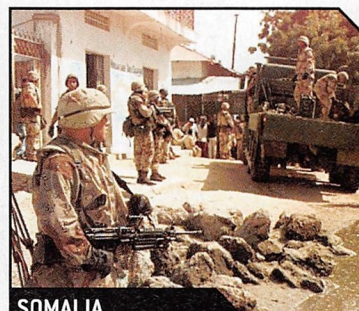
WORLD WAR II

The uniforms, the atmosphere, the clatter of mechanical weapons – all of these are lifted straight out of history's most famous conflict. By adding recognisable but remixed WWII elements, your brain's tricked into accepting what you see on screen as real. A bit.



VIETNAM

No single conflict revealed the true horror of modern warfare quite like Vietnam did. It's where *Killzone* gets its concept of small, intense squad battles from. It's also the focus of Guerrilla's next game, *Shellshock: 'Nam '67*.



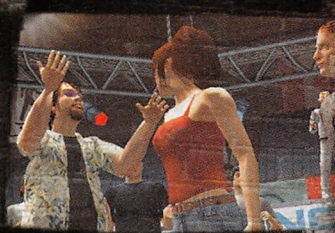
SOMALIA

Movies like *Black Hawk Down* show what happens when an elite military force is confronted with an unpredictable, violent and highly motivated urban force. Which is exactly what happens in *Killzone* too. Best get those body bags ready.

"Now more than ever, Hawk is the definitive virtual skateboarding experience - 9.5/10"
- Australian GamePro



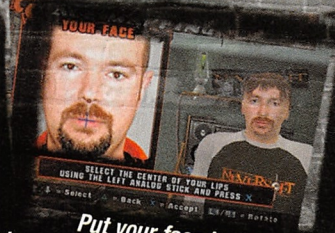
THUG™ stars YOU as a skate punk out to make it big.



Star in all of the Story Mode movies alongside the pros.



Do whatever it takes – run, climb, and of course, skate – to make it to the top.



Put your face in the game to skate as YOU.*

TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND

"Puts the thrill back into skating... an almost infinitely replayable experience"

- Official Australian PlayStation®2 Magazine

"It beats the previous Hawk's games and everything else."

- PSW Magazine

"Driving! Climbing! Building! Running! Skating will NEVER be the same again!"

- Official PlayStation®2 Magazine (U.K.)



NOW AVAILABLE
THUGONLINE.COM



PlayStation®2



NEVERSOFT

ACTIVISION

activision.com.au

*Face mapping technology is exclusive to PlayStation 2 computer system and requires online connectivity.



M15+
MEDIUM LEVEL
ANIMATED VIOLENCE

© 2003 Activision, Inc. and its affiliates. Published and distributed by Activision Publishing, Inc. Activision is a registered trademark and THUG is a trademark of Activision, Inc. and its affiliates. All rights reserved. Tony Hawk is a trademark of Tony Hawk. Developed by Neversoft Entertainment, Inc. "PlayStation" and the "PS" Family logo are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Online icon is a trademark of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Gamespy and the "Powered by GameSpy" design are trademarks of GameSpy Industries, Inc. All rights reserved. All other trademarks and trade names are the property of their respective owners.

REVIEWS

ATTENTION! THIS SECTION CONTAINS EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO DECIDE WHAT TO BUY, AND WHAT TO LEAVE ALONE.



072 RAINBOW SIX 3
Hut! Hut! Hut! Why do they say that? Do they and American football teams know something we don't, eh?

PSW RATINGS

THE PSW SCORING SYSTEM IS DESIGNED TO MAKE YOUR BUYING DECISIONS SIMPLE. HERE'S HOW IT WORKS.

> 10/10	ESSENTIAL
> 9/10	BRILLIANT
> 8/10	RECOMMENDED
> 7/10	GREAT
> 6/10	DECENT
> 5/10	AVERAGE
> 4/10	POOR
> 3/10	VERY DISAPPOINTING
> 2/10	BLOODY RUBBISH
> 1/10	AVOID AT ALL COSTS

THE DIVERSE MIX OF GAMES THIS MONTH

shows off titles from all over the globe. In the Japanese corner sits a cross-legged adventure called *Project Zero 2* - it's a typically intellectual horror quest, starring a small girl with a penchant for taking pictures of dead people. The other bizarre Japanese contestant is *.Hack Infection*. It's a bit like our addled dreams, in that it combines misusing the internet, strange anime and saving the world. Delivering a smart salute in the direction of gritty realism, the US games here are all about the killing. We've spent days perfecting flawless terrorist head shots for the US Government in *Rainbow Six 3*, before chilling out with Hollywood license *Alias* and bustin' some phat moves on the Vegas strip in *Fight Night*. Hell, you've even got *Sphinx* in there representin' for the Egyptians. (Okay, so maybe it was made in the US. But the designers definitely read a coffee table book on Egypt). So there you have it, the perfect cultural mix. If only the world was like this, we'd have no wars. Except the war on terror. But when you think of it, that really isn't a war as much as it is a political showpiece for the imperialist American scum (*Commie! - Ed*). But at least there'd be a lot more vengeful ghosts and murderous jailhouse zombies! That has to be a plus, right?

/ RICHARD MELVILLE



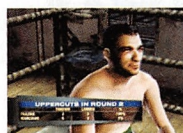
PSW GAME OF THE MONTH

The Game of the Month Award is what it is, the title that in PSW's opinion is the essential purchase of the month. Go and buy it. Now. Now!



PSW MUST BUY

Typically awarded to games that score 8/10 or above, representing one of the best in its genre. Simply, if you like this type of game, you 'must buy'. Clever eh?



082 Fight Night

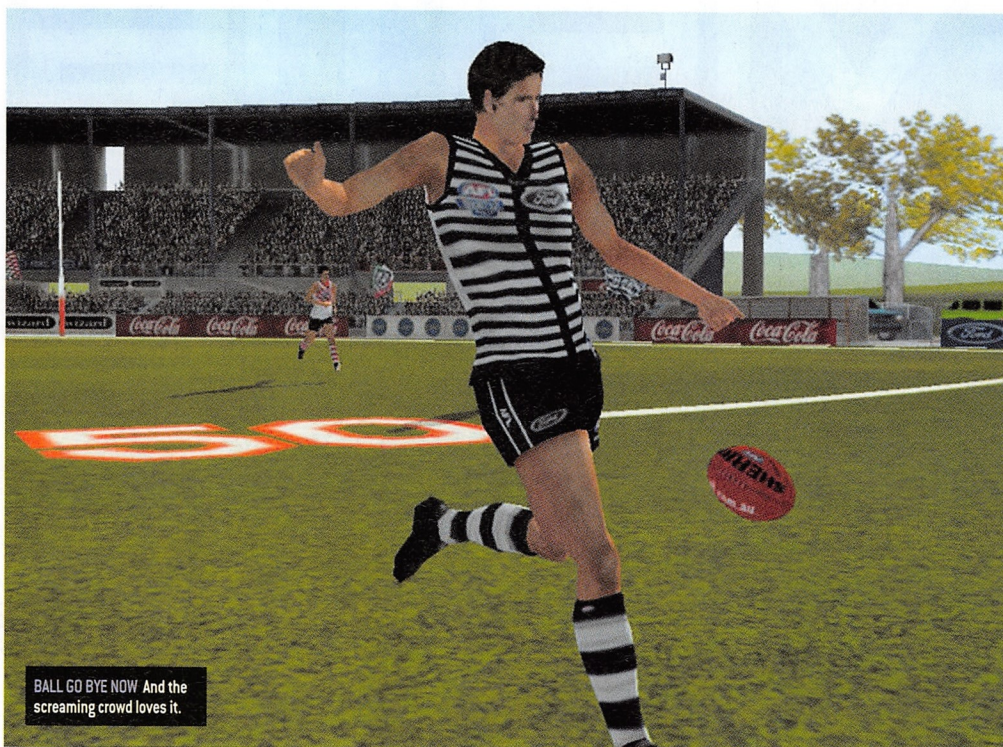


086 The Suffering

NEW RELEASES

THE TITLE SAYS IT ALL. WE'RE MASTERS OF BREVITY HERE AT PSW, AS YOU'VE NO DOUBT OBSERVED. HERE ARE SOME 'RELEASES'. ALL OF WHICH ARE 'NEW'. NONE OF THEM ARE WHAT YOU'D CALL 'OLD'. THERE'S REALLY VERY LITTLE ELSE TO SAY. EXCEPT, GET STUCK IN...

070	AFL LIVE PREMIERSHIP EDITION
072	RAINBOW SIX 3
077	ALIAS
078	CHAMPIONS OF NORRATH
080	PROJECT ZERO 2
082	FIGHT NIGHT
086	THE SUFFERING
088	.HACK INFECTION
088	SPHINX AND THE CURSED MUMMY
088	GOBLIN COMMANDER
089	RIDING SPIRITS 2
089	POOL PARADISE
089	SCOOPY DOO MYSTERY MAYHEM



BALL GO BYE NOW And the screaming crowd loves it.



BIG LIGHTS Nice shadows on the players there. Kinda...



STATE OF THE ART? Hardly the best visuals around, we know.



FRONT ROW A lot of effort evidently went into the stadiums...



HOIKA! As you'd expect, spectacular marks are common.



MUST BE LONELY So, uh, where's the game happening?

AFL LIVE PREMIERSHIP EDITION

LET'S WORK TOGETHER TO KILL OFF RUGBY LEAGUE...

> TYPE	AUSSIE SPORTS
> PLAYERS	1-2
> OUT	NOW
> PUBLISHER	ACCLAIM
> DEVELOPER	IRGURUS
> ONLINE	NO

OUR ILLUSTRIOUS FORMER EDITOR, JACKSON,

launched a stinging attack on EA Sports in his editorial of *PSW* #20. The subject principally was the pile of balls that was *Cricket 2004*, a game where you could see the gaffer tape holding the sucker together – even on screen. This game was an abject pile of balls. Not cricket balls, smelly, unwashed football player balls. But Jackson made a good point about the cynical approach developers take in developing games that a) aren't American and b) aren't soccer. Where on this slippery slope of Aussie sports gaming does *AFL Live 2004* sit?

Aussie Rules football is in a similar marginal situation as *Cricket 2004*, perhaps even more so. While there're a dozen countries around the world in which to sell a cricket game, there're probably a dozen states in which to sell an AFL game. *AFL Live*

Certainly betrays its lack of raw funds in development, it's certainly not as polished as a *Pro Evo*, or even a *FIFA*. However (and it's an important however), there are flashes of brilliance here that bring *AFL Live* up from the ilk of games like *Cricket 2004*.

OH DEAR, THE COMMENTARY

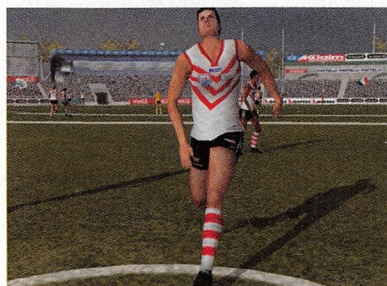
There's the obligatory horrid commentary prelude from Well-known Commentator Celebrity @ (in this case, Sandy Roberts). It sounds more like a phone conversation with your bank's automated voice service than a human being. It's a pity that commentary continues to uniformly suck in sports games.

What you'll notice straight away is a fluidity of play that is not that obvious even in a televised game. Short kicks, quick marks and handballs can be seamlessly strung together in an assault on goal. Sure, it doesn't happen all the time but you are

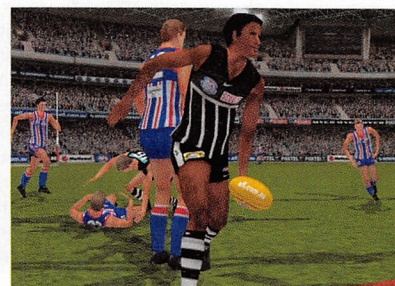
aware of how the team can be coordinated in this way and when it's happening, the game is a thrill.

This is part of a team sport phenomenon in gaming. The best examples are soccer games where the tactical thrill of simply moving the ball around and stretching the defensive team is as close to the on-field action as I want to get. But it's also true of a *Madden* where the sum of the parts come together to make a brilliant play, or even a good rugby game, as you try to spread the ball wide.

The basic play mechanic is satisfying, if a little artificial, tending towards an aerial game



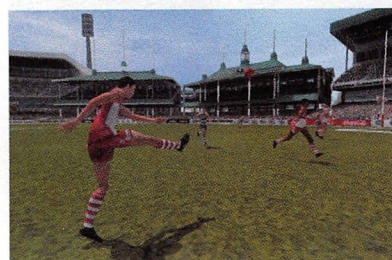
THE RED AND WHITE A close-up of a Fremantle player.



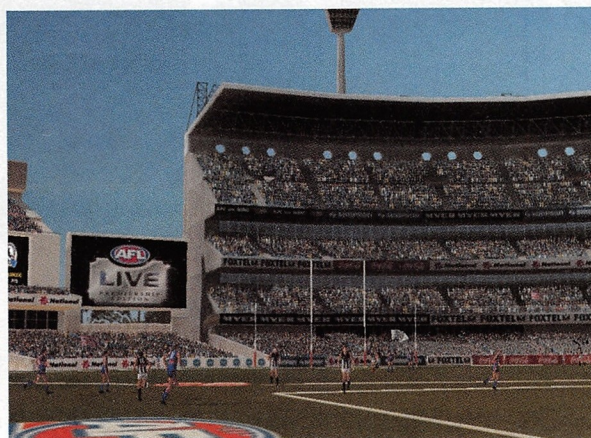
STONE THE CROWS And here's a Port Adelaide guy... we think.



AIEEEE! "The red ball's coming right for my lovely face!"



SIEG HEIL! He's not really goose-stepping, but it looks like it!



INSERT PLUG Note the copious amount of advertising in the stands. Gotta love capitalism.

when most matches are spent largely on the ground. Your default difficulty opponents don't miss kicks [or marks] and generally play like a well-oiled machine. Aussie Rules more than most sports requires a minimum of finesse and a maximum of thuggery. It would be nice if the game would simulate more of the ground play and the rough-and-tumble.

UP THERE, DEWHURST!

A great deal of time has been spent on pivotal play moments, free kicking and marking in particular. These two parts are excellently simulated with players showing a realistic response to the whole complicated physical movement. That kick for goal with seconds on the clock is awe-inspiring, as is the gut-wrenching leap for a mark in front of goal.

But the game is held back by its lack of elegant animation elsewhere. The collision detection is patchy, with tackles not quite realistic enough. While marking and kicking look excellent, the jarring switch to normal running is not convincing. Neither is common-or-garden variety running, which looks to employ a coat hanger physics engine in the

player jerseys. To be fair, soccer has got to be a lot easier to simulate in this department than Aussie Rules football but this is not quite up to our lofty standards.

The game uses video replays to streamline the experience, cutting out the awkward setting for free kicks and such, but the value of repeated viewings of most marks is questionable. All in all, general play in all the modes is a strange gumbo of brilliant moments, generally satisfying play and occasionally crappy animation. But, it is fun.

Sadly, there's not a lot of variety between game modes. A friendly, a season game or the grand final all feel pretty much the same except for the obligatory changes in commentary. It's all a little too repetitive and the finer grades of play variety need to be explored in future versions of AFL Live.

BUTTON HELL

No game in the world should require a manual. None. Manuals are there for the anal completists who want to read the minutiae of a back-story and ogle some fine artwork. So why is it that I can't for the life of me find a menu to tell me what the buttons do? There're a number of

TRAINING SCHMAINING

CHOICE SNAPS OF THE VILLAGERS FROM MIO'S PHOTO ALBUM...

The training options are flawed, feel a little broken and really have nothing in common with how an AFL team would actually train. The training consists of a string of Tony Hawk style challenges, a stop-start succeed or fail affair that is a little absurd.

Worse, the game doesn't even have the common decency to indicate when the training games actually begin. All it takes is a simple "Ready? Go!" and I wouldn't have to endure hordes of great apes falling all over me when I'm not even aware I should be doing anything. Certainly lazy and, after ten minutes, more than little bit funny.



different button configuration options, but I'd need the manual nearby to find out what has actually changed. Granted, this is a multi-format title, but did Acclaim lack the budget to implement even the most basic customisation?

Through a combination of occasional brilliance, a strong play mechanic and a budget that didn't extend to ironing out the creases, AFL Live Premiership Edition comes up a better than average sports title. It's a lot of fun but lacking in the polish that would make it a standout. Acclaim, please spend the money on hiring an ex-Pro Evo developer and reap the rewards. If you build a great Aussie Rules title, they will come. Not just the average Collingwood supporter, but the whole damned population. Definitely a promising step for the franchise.

/JOHN DEWHURST

PSW VERDICT

UPPERS	DOWNERS
Good play mechanics	Training is poor
Some strong animations	Commentary sucks
Understandable play	Emphasis on aerial game
Fair execution	Lacks polish

GRAPHICS > Inconsistent but good 7

SOUNDS > Dire commentary 5

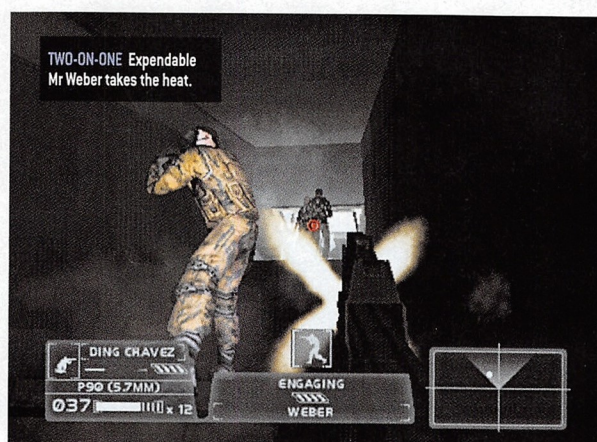
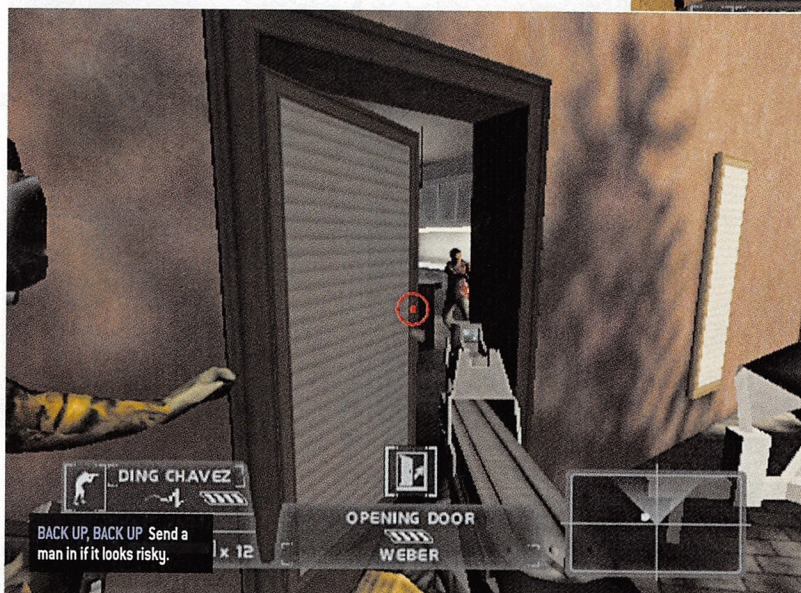
GAMEPLAY > Better than most Oz sports games 7

OVERALL SCORE
The lack of polish makes a strong game something less. Keep at it, Acclaim, you'll get there.

7



GOING ALONE Here's us, being all macho and taking care of terrorists on our own.



RAINBOW SIX 3

EASY-ACCESS STEALTH SHOOTER THAT TAKES THE *SPLINTER CELL* TEMPLATE AND DUMBS IT DOWN FOR THE MASSES. THAT'S A GOOD THING, BY THE WAY.

> TYPE	SHOOTING
> PLAYERS	1-8
> OUT	NOW
> PUBLISHER	UBI SOFT
> DEVELOPER	RED STORM
> ONLINE	YES

YOUR NAME IS DING. DING CHAVEZ. STOP laughing, this is supposed to be really serious stuff about terrorists and war. Ding is the lead member of a crack anti-terror team, operating in the near future to rid the world of the forces of evil. Ding does this by sneaking around tunnels and buildings in the dark shooting men with goatee beards while using night vision goggles.

But he doesn't do it alone. Your Ding has three

playmates, all controlled by the PlayStation2 as you go about your world-cleansing business. That's the game in a nutshell. You're essentially a man manager with a machine gun, telling these guys where to go, sending them to their death and forcing them to do all the bad stuff on your behalf while you, like any decent manager, sit there doing nothing while taking all the credit for the hard work of other people.

What could have been a logistical nightmare of button pressing has actually been made extremely simple — you point where you want your men to go, press X, and away they go, pausing only to shoot anyone of evil intent in

their way. Sometimes they die when doing this, but that's OK — this may be a Tom Clancy game set in the same unforgiving, dark and realistic universe as *Splinter Cell*, but *Rainbow Six 3* is much easier on you than most squad-based shooters. If your three men die you can still go it alone and complete the mission, although obviously in a much more pained manner.

When playing the game on its easiest difficulty it's possible to blast your way through without being particularly stealthy at all. With the game set to its easiest level of hardness, you can take the lead and blast through yourself, leaving your three team-mates to follow and pick the pieces of



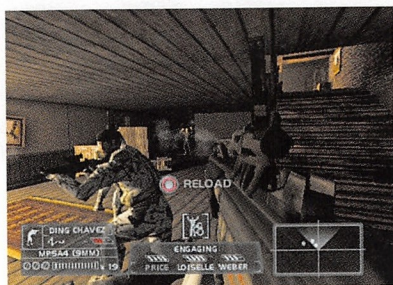
DON'T SHOOT Women in stealth games — shooting them is never a good idea.



YOU CAN RUN... But you can't hide. Or avoid dying, evil scum.



MAN DOWN! MAN DOWN! It's OK — losing a guy isn't the end.



DEFUSE THE SITUATION Clear the area, then send your team in to neutralize terrorist bombs.



CORRIDORS OF DEATH Behind every door lurks evil men with goatee beards and guns.



DING! NOOO! The radar on the right shows our team mates are miles away — we're being brave and stupid and going it alone.

“WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN A LOGISTICAL NIGHTMARE OF BUTTON PRESSING HAS ACTUALLY BEEN MADE VERY SIMPLE.”

dead terrorist meat. Playing this way, *Rainbow Six 3* becomes something extremely rare in the world of stealth video games — fun. Not only is this a huge relief, it also proves that not all infiltration games have to make you cry by being stupid-hard or severely punish you for every minor mistake you make.

However, running about like this is the foolish

way to play. You'll die a lot using the stupid approach, and you won't want to do that very much thanks to how awfully long the game takes to load levels — so slow, in fact, you may even find yourself tempted to pop out and put the kettle on. *Rainbow Six 3* also has the audacity to call its mid-level checkpoint saves “quick saves”. Seeing as how they take ages and leave the game frozen on whatever you were doing when you passed the save point we'd argue that they're nothing of the sort.

Anyway, to really progress in *Rainbow Six 3* you have to use your team-mates properly, and that means ordering them about. Pressing the

magic X button when you're near a door (doors are always a sign of danger in video games) brings up a secondary action menu. Here you have alternate choices. You can tell your guys to pile in and shoot everything. You can order them to chuck in a stun grenade to confuse attackers while leaving hostages unharmed. Or for the real playing-soldiers-as-a-kid experience, you can make them wait for a “Zulu” command.

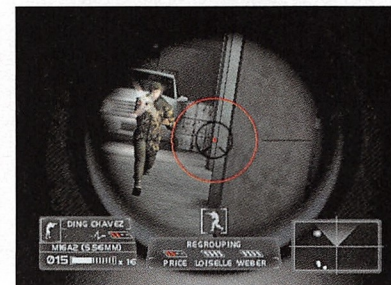
What's this “Zulu” all about then? Well, say there are two doors into a room. You can tell your guys to open one door when you say so by issuing them with a “Zulu” command (issued by simply pressing a button), while you open the



HANDS UP, BABY Some enemies surrender, like this wimp.



GO, GO, GO! Playing on easy difficulty makes killing easy.



SILENT SCOPE Zooming from afar is essential for staying alive.

THE TOM CLANCY UNIVERSE — EXPLAINED!

GET TO KNOW YOUR TOM CLANCY ENVIRONMENT WITH PSW'S HANDY GUIDE.



MEN ARE REAL MEN

Look at them. They have moustaches and names like Chavez. You can't get manlier than that. In Tom Clancy's ultra-realistic, near-future universe, the males of this world have developed to caveman-like hunks of pure war. They don't moisturise... unless they're a bit... *you know...*



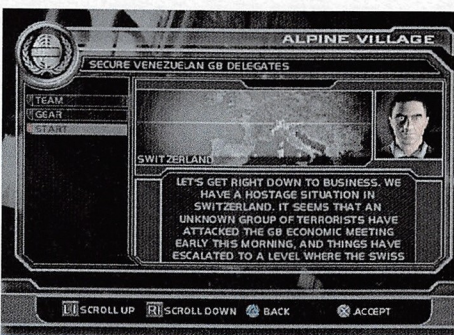
YOU DIE, YOU STAY DEAD

As with all games set in Clancy worlds, you don't get to run around hoovering up medpacks and armour to stay alive. *Rainbow Six 3* does generously give you a five-segment health bar, but four of them can be removed with one close-range hit. You're going to be dying a lot.



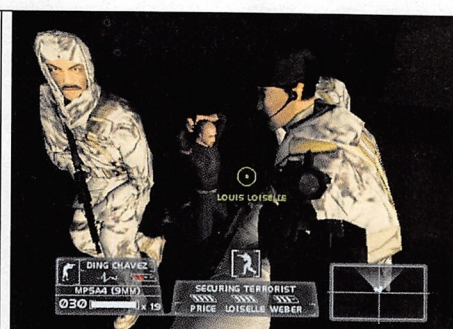
IT'S ALWAYS NIGHT, OR AT LEAST SUNSET

Some levels of *Splinter Cell* were unplayable without using night vision all the time, setting graphical development 20 years back in time to when games could only be made in green. *Rainbow Six* isn't quite as bad, but still operates mostly at nuclear winter levels of light.



TERRORISTS EVERYWHERE

Yeah, big surprise. We didn't see any of this coming. Each mission briefing scene reveals the seen-it-all-before premise of men in balaclavas taking over buildings somewhere where most people speak Spanish. If someone's wearing black, shoot them. Don't even think about it.



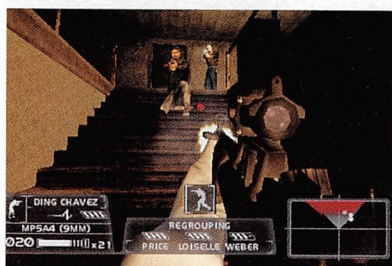
EVERYONE'S A HOSTAGE

Big surprise. The day Tom Clancy has an idea that isn't terrorists stealing something and taking people hostage is the day they'll prize the pen out of his cold, dead hands. The plot of *Rainbow Six 3* is predictable beyond measure — shady terrorists, South Americans, hostages, bombs...



HELICOPTERS

According to Tom Clancy, by the year 2007 humans will only travel to places by helicopter. Helicopter in, helicopter out, abseil out of helicopter to shop, helicopter transport back home. We can't wait for this. It makes sense — how else do you explain all those weirdos wearing military jackets?



UPSTAIRS TAKEDOWN

Some guys roll grenades down at you.



FROM BOTH ENDS

For him, the war of terror is over.

further. Then you repeat the tactic around the next corner. If any of your three back up men die during this scoping period it's OK, thanks to them magically reappearing all alive again in time for the next mission. You can shoot them by accident and it doesn't matter, you can shoot them on purpose and it doesn't matter either. But if you, the main man Ding Chavez, dies, it's game over. This style of play, and the idea of protecting your key bloke while sending off scouts to look out for danger up ahead, just feels good. It makes you feel like you're Winston Churchill shuffling model tanks around a map of North Africa. It's strategic, but it's also easy going enough to be fun. In fact, *Rainbow Six 3* is the first really accessible Clancy game on PS2. And that's something worth shouting about because, unlike realistic shooters like *Ghost Recon*, *Rainbow Six 3* is action packed.



YOU GO IN. I'LL DO THE COVERING

This is how to play — hide behind boxes and let them do it all.

other yourself, thereby unleashing a classic pincer manoeuvre. It's a very cool thing to do and one that's often necessary.

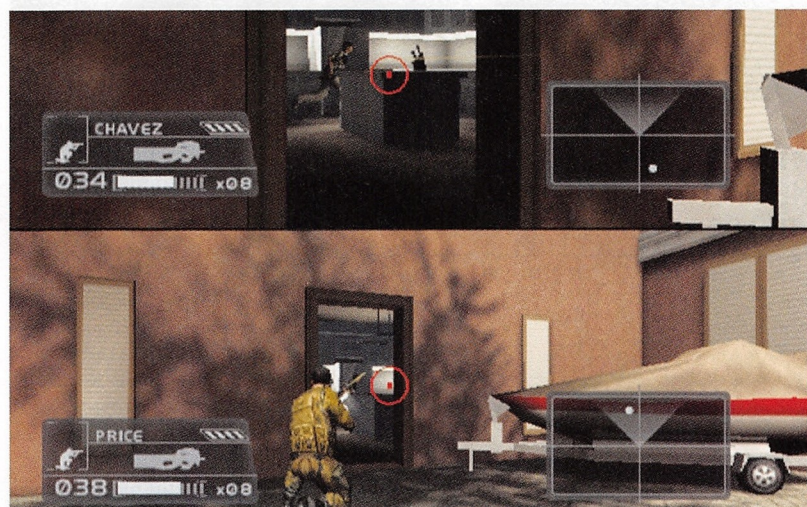
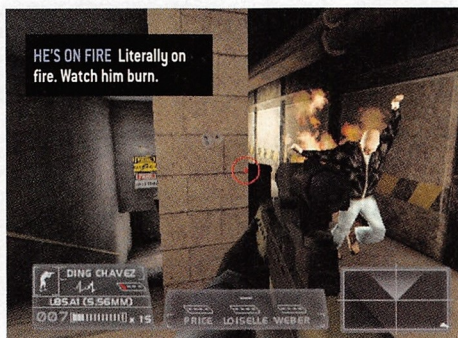
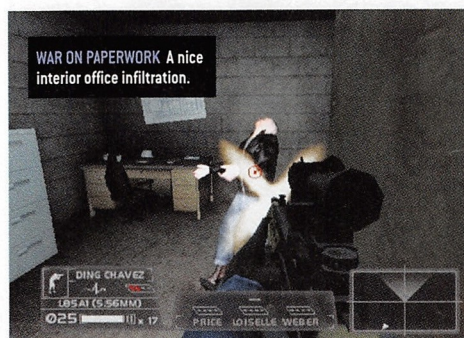
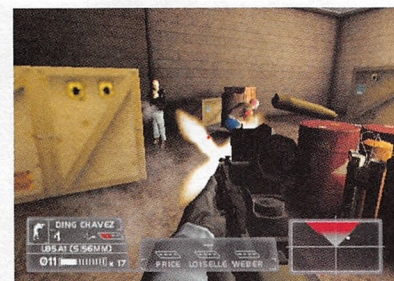
Unlike in most seriously dull Clancy games you have a life bar in *Rainbow Six 3* to make progression a little easier, but its measly few segments can be wiped out in one second should you blunder into a room full of heavily-armed terrorists. Being discovered or getting spotted doesn't necessarily mean instant death though, and working your way through the game doesn't require too much painstaking trial and error — you can wing it.

It doesn't take long before you fall into a fairly solid pattern of play. You zoom in using the scope on your gun to have a look around, then send your men up ahead to check things out and take out any vulnerable enemies, before moving your vulnerable main man Ding forwards to investigate

MEN WANTED. OWN GUNS AN ADVANTAGE

Rainbow Six 3 has been out on Xbox for a few months now. It was a slow starter, but has now become the system's most popular online game. This is thanks to the team-based multiplayer options, which inject maximum tension into a shooter like this. Happily, these game options survive on PS2, resulting in an online battle that kicks the hell out of the *SOCOM* experience.

Better still, *Rainbow Six 3* offers great multiplayer options without the need to install Sony's cumbersome online system. Two players can join together to play a split-screen mission, covering each other's back and taking it in turns



"IT MAKES YOU FEEL LIKE YOU'RE WINSTON CHURCHILL SHUFFLING MODEL TANKS AROUND A MAP OF NORTH AFRICA."

TWO-PLAYER CO-OP Haven't got PS2's online kit? We don't blame you. Luckily, *Rainbow Six 3* has a great co-op offline team game.

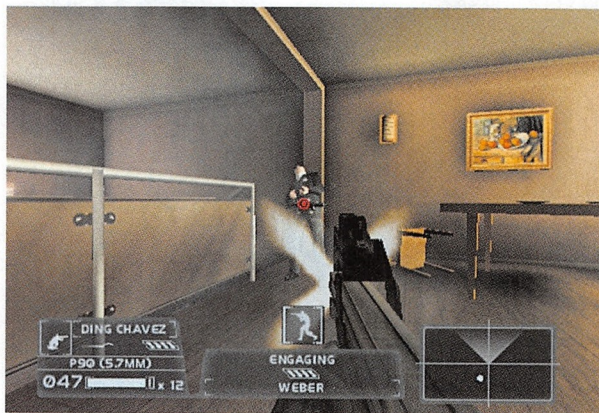


IN THE STUDY, WITH THE BIG GUN Groin shot bonus: 5000pts.

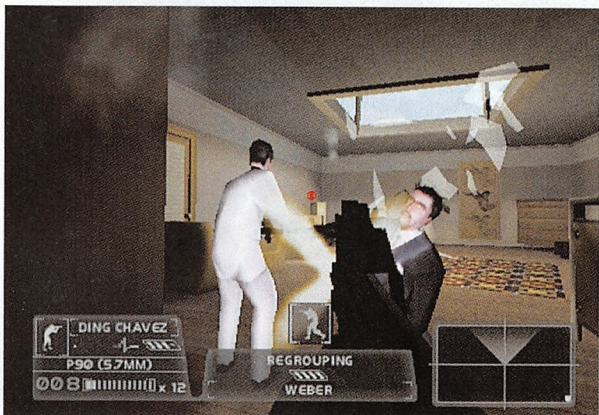
CELLAR DWELLER We could've sneaked down. We chose not to.

to "go in". You only play the same levels as the main game, but it's still a great addition, so much better than the standard deathmatch options that shooters routinely cobble together. It doesn't look as good as the single player game — you lose the sight of your weapon completely — but considering that the Xbox version didn't have this option at all, it's a very nice extra for PS2-owning anti-terror fans.

Your non-human team-mates in the single-player game aren't that clever, though. They are bright enough to not shoot the hostages, but easily become confused when walking about the levels. There you are, immersed in the shadows like a ninja, whispering the Zulu command for your men to move in and attack. Then they blow the illusion by bumping into each other and the poor old PS2 gets a bit confused about who's supposed to walk off in the lead. Sometimes they walk around in little circles, jostling for position and bumping into walls. Often they get in your way, shuffling awkwardly on the spot when you try to get through a doorway they're innocently blocking. You'll start to hate your foolish team mates — except when they're doing their job and taking bullets for you. Then they're OK.



A SITUATION Inside the Island HQ and it's business as usual in the race to save the boss.



SHOT OUT Collateral damage sees the skylight disintegrate thanks to our wobbly aim.



The sound is odd too. It's great when you're sneaking down some stairs and the super-tense sneaking-down-some-stairs-music comes on, but lead man Chavez makes this ludicrous wheezing sound when he's injured. It sounds like a first year woodworking class going mental with the tenon saws. His pounding heart helps boost atmosphere no end, however, and you can hear your team-mate's footfalls as they patter along behind you too. It's all pretty great when you're terrified of dying, panicking that the enemies can hear your idiot team-mate's feet clumping away and the stairs creaking as you edge downwards. Plus the first time we heard a hand grenade tinkling down some stairs towards us we physically recoiled in terror. All in all, quite



THAT'S MY BOY Your team mates are dumb, but very good shots.



"FINALLY WE HAVE A TOM CLANCY GAME THAT'S TENSE AND ENJOYABLE TO PLAY, WITHOUT BEING TOO COMPLICATED."

good. Hence the eight out of ten.

There are a lot of awkward mid-level saving moments where the game grinds to a halt, though, spoiling that immersed-in-Hell feeling. The loading times are very long too, it could look a bit better and we could come up with a more original storyline in seconds. But as an accessible and fun stealth shooter it works. *Rainbow Six 3* is a strategic, occasionally hard, military game, but one that thankfully doesn't



ONE-ON-TWO The tables reversed, our death is imminent

YOU CAN EVEN BARK ORDERS WITH YOUR OWN MOUTH!

HOW *RAINBOW SIX 3* USES VOICES TO LOWER THUMB DEPENDENCY.

"REGROUP!"

"BREACH AND CLEAR ON ZULU!"

"OPEN AND CLEAR ON ZULU!"

"ZULUUUUUUUUU!"



Despite what *Tomorrow's World* said back in 1978, voice recognition technology still doesn't work most of the time. *Rainbow Six 3* appears to have cracked it though. Now, and thanks to the SOCOM headset, it's possible to issue commands to your three team-mates by shouting down a microphone. You have to speak clearly, and you feel like the biggest

idiot on earth, but it works. Point at a door, tell them to "Open and clear on Zulu!" wait for them to acknowledge your instruction, then run away and shout "Zulu" to make them go in and kill everyone themselves.

If you've got the house to yourself, try it out. You really don't want anyone to see you talking to your PlayStation2. Trust us on this.



demand a massive amount of patience to get through. You can sneak about in darkness being the hardcore undercover man, but you can also blow yourself up by shooting a rocket into a wall or go mad running around with a machine gun.

With great online options and a very clever two-player cooperative offline game, *Rainbow Six 3* appeals to everyone after a new favourite game to shoot people in. Finally, we have a Tom Clancy game that's tense and enjoyable to play, without being too complex for the masses.

/ GARY CUTLACK

PSW VERDICT

UPPERS	DOWNERS
> Simple team controls	> Slightly foolish PS2-controlled team-mates
> Less taxing stealth action	> Very tired storyline
> Great two-player game	> Takes itself too seriously
> Works online too	

GRAPHICS > Not as shiny as *Splinter Cell*, but close

8

SOUNDS > All the right atmospheric buttons pressed

8

GAMEPLAY > Hard, big, superb multiplayer options

9

OVERALL SCORE

Not the usual bore-fest we associate with Tom Clancy products, *Rainbow Six 3* is instead an enjoyable, fast-paced and thrilling adventure with great multiplayer bonuses.

8



MONSTER TRUCK Preparing to race the giant truck.



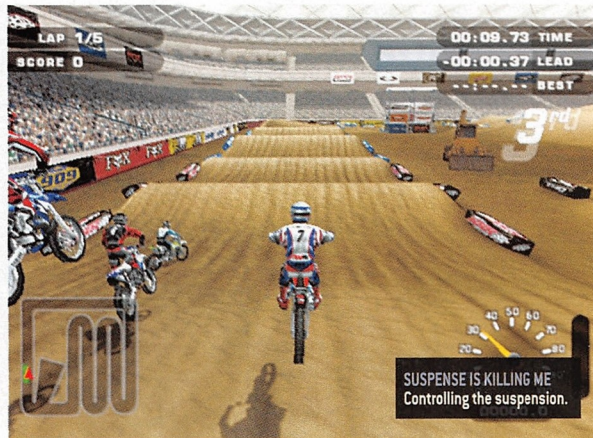
GATEKEEPER The riders prepare for the big off.



AIRBORNE Position yourself carefully to get maximum air.



SORE ARSE No amount of padding can help out here.



SUSPENSE IS KILLING ME Controlling the suspension.

MX UNLEASHED

REALLY DIRTY BIKES. FILTHY BIKES. THE SORT OF BIKES THAT WOULD DO YOU AND YOUR MATE FOR A TENNER. COME AND RIDE ONE. YEAH, RIDE.

> TYPE	DRIVING
> PLAYERS	1
> OUT	NOW
> PUBLISHER	THQ
> DEVELOPER	RAINBOW
> ONLINE	NO

MOTOCROSS IS ONE OF THOSE SPORTS YOU have to be genuinely insane to enjoy. Throwing yourself high into the air on the back of a squealing metal beast can surely only appeal to the criminally crazy. As such, it makes for ideal video game fodder, as the little PlayStation2 men will happily soak up any number of crunching falls on your behalf, leaving you to whoop with delight when they get it right and cringe in mock agony when they land straight on their faces.

Control of your biker is well executed. Using the left analogue stick you're able shift the weight of your rider about the bike in order to steer and perform stunts, in much the same way as real motocross riders do. Combined with a clutch for fast acceleration, it provides a handling model that is both realistic and easy to use. Only the sensitivity of the analogue stick lets it down, making subtle movement more difficult than it should be. The trick system is similarly simple to

use with spins handled by the analogue stick and tricks performed by button presses.

Naturally, big points are achieved by pulling massive air and then putting together a combination of as many tricks as possible before gravity drags your rider back down to earth. With an appropriately long run up and good execution it's possible to gain immense airtime and with it, the biggest of tricks. Using this formula we've managed complete double backwards somersaults with a handful of grabs thrown in just for good measure. Frankly, it turns our stomachs just thinking of such a thing.

Game modes are comprehensive, including Quick races, Race seasons, Trick modes and the Freestyle mode. The Freestyle mode is notably enjoyable, giving you a huge area to ride around in any direction you care to. Sprinkled with ramps that practically beg you to use and physically abuse them, the freestyle arenas are also littered with challenges that include crazed races against monster trucks and bi-wing planes. Overall, these levels offer a wonderful break from the main thrust of the game, which is racing.

The races allow you to use the skills you have learnt while messing about in order to get your bike around the track as quickly as possible. It's a reasonably technical affair that requires the player to understand how to get the bike to fly over large jumps but stay close to the ground over the low jumps. Corners have to be taken either smoothly for long bends or with tight clutch control on the more severe twists.

This is when the fiddly nature of the controls really rears its troublesome head. The analogue stick has far too large a dead spot and is far too twitchy beyond that. This makes it difficult to precisely steer the bike while also shifting the weight of the rider appropriately enough forward or backward to control the size and height of individual jumps. Using the digital pad makes life no easier as this substitutes the vagaries of the analogue method for a time-related system that makes quick turns unnecessarily difficult.

Still, we had a lot of fun playing *MX Unleashed*. The only really problem stems from troubles with the PS2's analogue control stick. If you fancy a game with a little of the extreme sports, a little racing and a little exploring, this might be for you. Just don't expect it to be Jesus on a bicycle.

/ MARK SORRELL



THE HILLS ARE ALIVE With the sound of two-strokes.

PS2 VERDICT

> UPPEERS	> DOWNERS
> Clever control system	> Gameplay can be fiddly
> Plenty of variety	> A bit rough looking
> Interesting freestyle mode	> Controls hard to use
> Genuine moto brands	> Can be empty-looking

GRAPHICS > Adequate but little more.

SOUNDS > Raspy and raucous, much like the real thing

GAMEPLAY > Great idea, slightly fiddly controls

OVERALL SCORE
Better than most PS2 motorbike games and there's lots of fun to be had, particularly in the Freestyle mode. The controls are a bit of a nuisance but there's plenty here for moto fans.

7



HELPFUL "You just have go down there and take the first left..."



BZZZAAAP! Lots of nice spell effects in this one, yep.



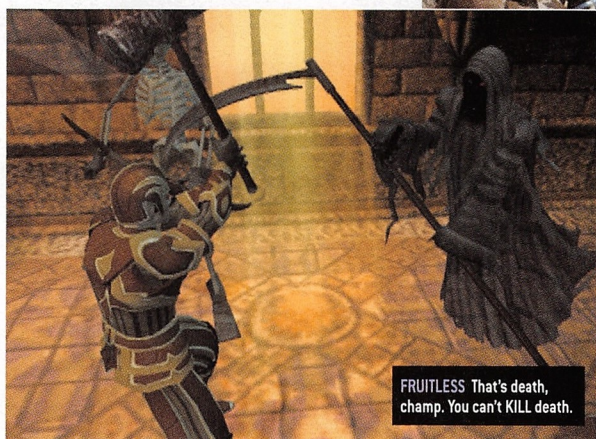
SKWEEEEE! Is the noise we imagine this monster would make.



ANTICHRIST Sometimes, a can of Mortein just won't suffice.



GOSH! Looks nice, doesn't it? Shame it's a cut-scene.



FRUITLESS That's death, champ. You can't KILL death.

CHAMPIONS OF NORRATH

PSW FINALLY GETS INTO EVERQUEST... KINDA.

> TYPE	ACTION
> PLAYERS	1 - 4
> OUT	NOW
> PUBLISHER	UBISOFT
> DEVELOPER	SNOWBLIND
> ONLINE	NO

IT SEEMS AS THOUGH EVERY ROLEPLAYING

franchise is breaking into the 3D action realm at the moment. First we had Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance (based on the hugely successful Dungeons & Dragons Forgotten Realms game world), then Hunter the Reckoning (based on the semi-popular White Wolf pen and paper RPG) and now we have a Fallout: Brotherhood of Steel, (based on the critically successful range of PC roleplaying games) and finally Champions of Norrath, the first attempt to bring a little action to the world of EverQuest. Developed by Snowblind, the team virtually responsible for creating the genre with Dark Alliance,

Champions of Norrath does away with most of the pretence of being an "action RPG" and instead concentrates almost solely on combat. Whilst this may sound a little straightforward and trite, the final product just goes to prove that keeping things simple is sometimes the right way to go.

BUMP IN THE NIGHT

Set in the world of Norrath, Champions casts the player as one of one of five different characters (each with a male and female model) charged by a very forgettable and stereotypical noble Elf dude to fight against the orcs, goblins, demons and

other things that go bump in the night and bring trouble to the once peaceful world. Chances are that if you're reading this you already have some interest in or have played a number of RPGs at some stage. If that's the case you know the rest of the story already. Although the plot could be politely called lightweight there is the occasional flash of storytelling genius that will surprise you and may even find yourself laughing out loud every now and then. Well scripted moments aside, the plot serves little more purpose than to give the player an excuse to jump into battle after battle, a prospect that could quickly become dull and repetitive if the battle mechanics and range of monsters wasn't so damn good. The controls are, for want of a better term, brilliant – wonderfully streamlined and extremely intuitive. A single button press controls attacks, quick spells or skills, drinking health or mana potions, blocking and switching weapons. The buttons also have a "shift" style function allowing the player to hotkey various spells or skills to different buttons that can then be accessed by hitting the assigned shift key and the corresponding button.

As far as skills are concerned, Norrath borrows from another successful action RPG, Diablo, and



FLICK MAN Extermination's a risky business in fantasy land.



NO BONES ABOUT IT What's a hack-'em-up without a skeleton?



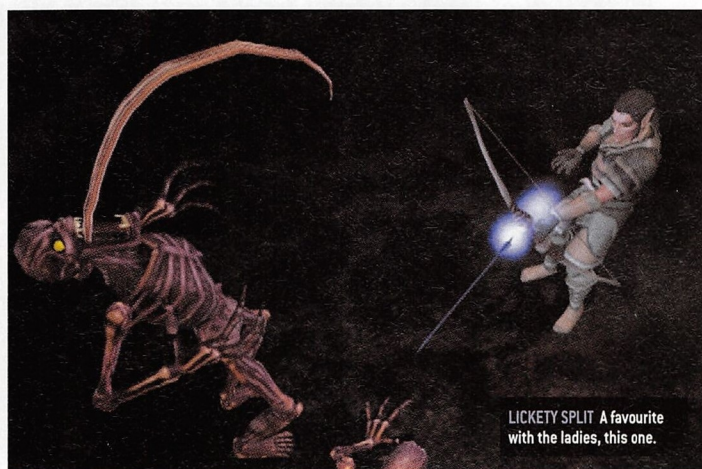
WHERE'S BUFFY? Or at least Angel? Willow? Cordy?



I AM THE EGG-MAN I am the Walrus. Goo-goo-ga-joo!



HERE BOY! "C'mon! Chase the stick! Good monster!"



LICKETY SPLIT A favourite with the ladies, this one.



TONGUE TWISTER "Here, let me hold that for you."



OFFERING "Well, all right - but just a small taste!"



TWOSOME Orc/Human Interpretive dance duos are quite big in Norrath.

gives each character a branching skill tree with 10+ skills, each of which has 20 levels of expertise. There is a lot of room for character customisation and the sheer number of skills should give you more than enough excuse to play through the game a couple of times just to see how they work. Add to this four-player cooperative and online cooperative play and you have a hell of a lot of replay potential.

HERO GO SQUISH NOW

Combat in Norrath is essentially a beefed up version of Gauntlet but it's kept fun by the range of enemies the player has to face as well as the nicely varied enemy response AI that is on display. Instead of taking the Dark Alliance approach of having every enemy simply charge straight at you, Norrath opts for a trickier approach with some of the monsters only fighting in groups but running away when their numbers dwindle past a certain point, protecting important monsters, making hit and run attacks and some of the more annoying enemies even resurrect their fallen comrades. Whilst the AI cannot be classified as smart by any stretch of the imagination, the variation seen in

battles keeps the near constant combat from ever becoming dull. Frequent and tough boss battles also make sure you keep on your toes.

Saves are handled by evenly dispersed save points that automatically save your game when you move within range. The save points are close enough together that you may begin to think that it's overkill but when the action heats up in the last half of the game you'll be thanking you lucky stars that you don't have to slog too far to get back to the point where you died.

BETTER THAN BAD, IT'S GOOD

Champions of Norrath is based on the Dark Alliance engine but you'd hardly know with the amount of work Snowblind has put into tweaking it. The tweaked engine can really push the polygons and the final result is a really attractive fantasy world. Animations are excellent with a good deal of variation between the monsters. Unfortunately the player character animations are all a little too samey — it would have been nice to see a little more individuality. The best that can be said about the soundtrack is that it serves its purpose in a

generic fantasy kind of way. It's not memorable in any way shape or form but that's much better than being annoying. Unfortunately the voice acting doesn't work nearly as well. Whilst the frequent conversations are decent the incidental comments made by the characters are cliché at best and just downright frustrating at worst. Worse still they seem to be repeated at fairly close intervals.

/DANIEL WILKS

PSW VERDICT		
> UPPERS	> DOWNERS	
> Looks great	> Bad voice acting	
> Unpretentious	> Light weight	
> Fun combat	> Dull plot	
> Addictive	> Character animations	
GRAPHICS	> Last year's engine, this year's graphics.	9
SOUNDS	> Generic fantasy music and annoying voices	6
GAMEPLAY	> Like Gauntlet on growth hormones	8
OVERALL SCORE		8
Snowblind have topped Baldur's Gate Dark Alliance with their first foray into the world of Norrath. We can't wait to see what they have up their sleeves for us next.		



ALONE IN THE DARK The village is the most eerie thing in PZ2.



UH OH Get attacked and the screen goes all freaky-like.



WE ARE FAMILY But when you get separated, it's chaos.



STICK IT IN THE ALBUM Every ghost photo you take is stored.



RED DEVIL The crimson butterflies abound - but why?

PROJECT ZERO 2

PSW HAS HAD MANY A DARK FANTASY ABOUT TWIN SISTERS. BUT NONE QUITE AS HORRIFYING AS *PROJECT ZERO 2*. WELL, NOT IN THAT SENSE, ANYWAY.

> TYPE	SURVIVAL HORROR
> PLAYERS	1
> OUT	MAY
> PUBLISHER	UBISOFT
> DEVELOPER	TECMO
> ONLINE	NO

IF YOU FIND THE SIXTH SENSE, THE EXORCIST and the childcatcher from *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* scary, then you'll love *Project Zero 2*. But if it takes the sight of people's guts being sprayed across walls and the sound of chainsaws being used in anger to make you cower behind the sofa, then you probably won't.

Project Zero 2 is a survival horror ghost story pure and simple, with all the advantages and limitations that implies. Sure, it does what it does well, but all that it really wants to do is put a shiver up your spine. Not gross you out with unnumbered buckets of blood and guts.



GET THEM OFF ME Some moments are genuinely unnerving.

The soundtrack thrills and chills in equal measure with grunts, creaks, unearthly moans of the damned and haunting ethereal cries. Every move you make sets off ominous atmospheric effects. You can barely open a door without hearing or seeing *something* float away in the background. All of which makes it that much more creepy when you enter an empty room and you hear... absolutely nothing. Before being attacked by a dead woman.

SEEING THINGS

You control Mio in the usual way, holding down

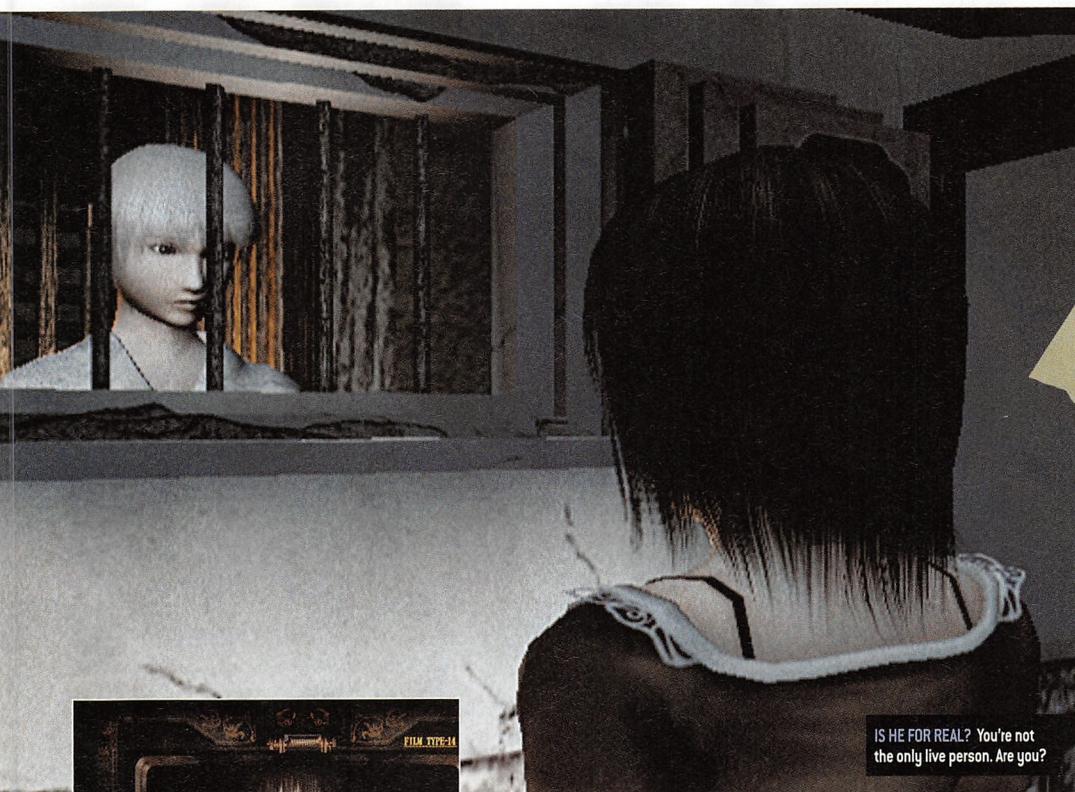


SISTER ACT Your sister Mayu is sensitive to paranormal powers.

the square button to turn Mio's saunter into a very slow run. Everything's hidden in the shadows, and illuminated only by the small beam of your torch. There's a desiccated air to everything that's a million miles away from the *Silent Hill* series' fleshy horror, but it suits a ghost story right down to the ground.

The plot behind *Project Zero 2* is some unashamed bunkum about two identical twin girls who stumble onto a deserted village, empty since a sinister ritual somehow decimated the inhabitants. You play Mio, always on the lookout for her twin Mayu who displays troubling psychic tendencies. Soon, she's lost and you're trying to save her from the threat of ritual murder, with only a battered old camera for company.

And that's where *Project Zero 2* scores maximum points for innovation. Instead of hitting ghosts with a big stick, Mio points her psychically-charged camera at them and literally shoots them down. All combat is seen through the lens of the camera, meaning that as soon as you're attacked the only way to survive is to actually face your fear. Get a decent snap of a ghost and blue ectoplasm will fly all over the place to indicate that you've injured it. Tension is



SUPER MODEL Characters are detailed, but pretty stylised.



HOLY CRAP! The odd shock makes up for lots of dawdling.



CAMERA VIEW This is how you try to snap ghosts. The better the shot, the more damage it does.

"ALL IT WANTS TO DO IS SEND A SHIVER DOWN YOUR SPINE. NOT GROSS YOU OUT WITH BUCKETS OF BLOOD AND GUTS."

increased by the fact that reloading after each shot uses up valuable seconds. The control pad beats like a heart in your hands as the spectre moves ever closer. If it touches you, you're metaphysically molested and lose energy in a fairly traditional way. What isn't traditional is the way a successful attack polarises the screen, sending it into a shocking white-out, as hideous screams echo about you. It's a truly traumatic experience, and enforces the idea that Mio is, quite literally, being frightened to death. The closer the ghost, however, the more damage you'll be able to do, so you'll end up playing 'chicken' and courting disaster for what can only be described as extreme close ups. It's certainly different, but with all the action being ethereal it also lacks a certain oomph.

The camera isn't the only holdover from the first game. *Project Zero 2* continues with the quirks of the original title, to the extent that

everything looks like it's been smeared with Marmite and left to rot for a couple of decades. It's a powerful vision of a deserted place and genuinely creepy for much of the time too. But given that Mio takes her time to pick her way through the empty streets, and that there's a fair amount of traditional survival horror key-finding, we suspect many won't have the patience to keep playing for a sustained period of time.

Allow us to sum up the problem with a bit of an odd metaphor: if you were a carpenter and you deliberately made a very spiky chair, it might be great art but rubbish furniture. And that's just what *Project Zero 2* is like. Everything that makes it interesting — the lack of weapons, slow pace, ambiguous cut scenes — also make it less immediate and fun to play. It's hard to mark *Project Zero 2* down just for accomplishing everything it wants to do, but that's what we're going to do anyway.

Project Zero 2 is really for survival horror nuts, but the rest of us needn't dismiss it out of hand. It may be a bit slow and unwieldy for most, but connoisseurs of fear might just find something special here.

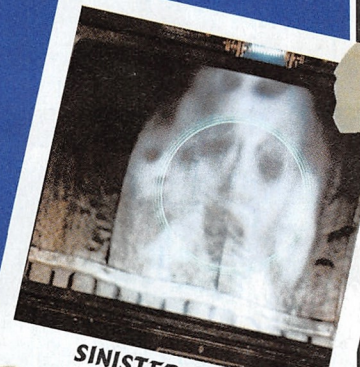
/ JOFF BROWN

DEAD RESIDENTS

CHOICE SNAPS OF THE VILLAGERS FROM MIO'S PHOTO ALBUM...



WONDER HOW SHE DIED? DUH.



SINISTER SPIRIT OR NASTY STAIN?



SAY CHEESE PLEASE, FELLAS...

PSW VERDICT

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>> UPBERS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Unique photo-based play > Ghosts can actually scare > Immersive atmosphere > Grown-up story | <p>> DOWNERS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Like wading through custard > Nothing really happens > It's extremely Japanese > Piles of to-ing and fro-ing |
|--|--|

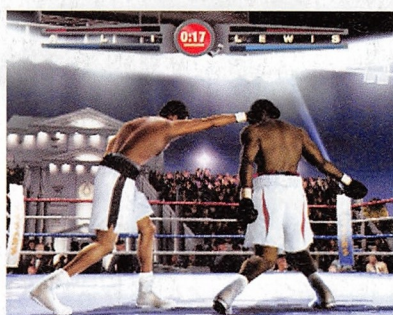
GRAPHICS > Detailed, eerie and very, very brown **7**

SOUNDS > Had us playing from behind the sofa **8**

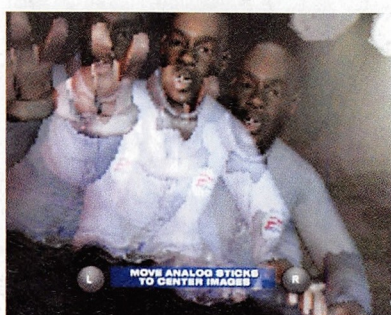
GAMEPLAY > When you're not shrieking, you're yawning **5**

OVERALL SCORE
A truly spooky story lives in this game, but we doubt whether you'll see it through to the end. We shouldn't really use the phrase 'not so much deadly as deadly dull' but guess what? We just did.

6



FLOAT LIKE A BUTTERFLY... But sting like a bee!



HOW MANY FINGERS? Dunno, but I think I can see dead people.



FIGHT NIGHT 2004

SNAP UP A RINGSIDE SEAT FOR THE BEST SPORTS GAME OF THE YEAR. ONE THAT KO'S *KNOCKOUT KINGS* AND PUTS *ROCKY* ON THE CANVAS WITHIN THE FIRST ROUND.

> TYPE	SPORTS
> PLAYERS	1-2
> OUT	APRIL
> PUBLISHER	EA
> DEVELOPER	EA
> ONLINE	NO

IF YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF BOXING STRETCHES no further than Sly Stallone's *Rocky* films, then *Fight Night 2004* will likely come as a bit of a shock. Those movies give the impression that fights can be won by keeping your guard permanently lowered and swinging your fists like a couple of pissed-up fat blokes going at it in the car park outside a Newcastle nightclub. They couldn't be more wrong.

Throwing punches is one thing, but if you don't bob, duck, lean and use your gloves, arms

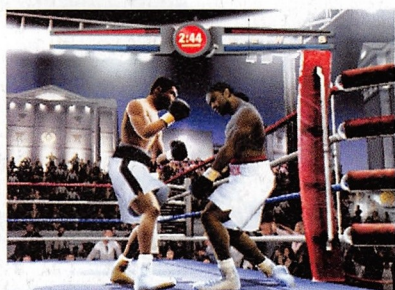
and elbows to cushion blows then you'll get a deserved pasting. It's as simple as that. For instance, take our first fight: we wanted to get straight into the ring and repeatedly punch someone's mushy face, so we just steamed blindly in with hooks, uppercuts and flurries of rabbit punches that rarely connected but drained the energy of our fighter and left him cruelly exposed to counter attacks. After only two rounds of walking into our opponent's fists we were seeing stars and the contest was over.

The next time we decided to play a more patient, defensive game, refusing to get drawn into any frantic trading of blows and instead waiting for our opponent to make his move. This kinda worked, even if defending is made more difficult by not being able to keep your guard up and move at the same time. We didn't knock out our opponent or even get close to putting him on the canvas, but the judges recognised the way we controlled portions of the fight and scored a handful of rounds in our favour. With practice it's possible to find a successful middle ground between these two polar approaches.

TRIPLE VISION

Offensive and defensive nuances are only possible thanks to the unique control system that assigns the left analogue stick to making your boxer dance around the ring, while the right analogue stick controls the punches. Move the right stick diagonally up in either direction and he'll jab out a right or left glove, push it to the left or right and then arc upwards and he'll attempt a hook-cum-haystacker; move it diagonally downwards in either direction and then arc upwards and he'll unleash an uppercut. The motion of the analogue stick basically mirrors the movement of your boxer's arm. Add body blows, feigned punches, two illegal punches and two powerful signature punches and you have plenty of combos to master. Holding down L1 and moving the left analogue stick, meanwhile, plants your boxer's feet firmly on the ground to give full control over his weaving upper body.

Hit the deck and you must use both analogue sticks to overlay two blurred visions of the ref standing over you with his real image before he counts to ten. The more times you're knocked



SHALL WE DANCE? Big fish, little fish, cardboard box...

GET BACK Dodging is easily as important as blocking.



ROUND TWO Ring-girls display the round number along with plenty of nubile woman flesh.

"IF YOU DON'T BOB, DUCK, LEAN AND USE YOUR GLOVES, ARMS AND ELBOWS TO CUSHION BLOWS THEN YOU GET A PASTING."

down the more sluggish the images are to manoeuvre and the fuzzier they become until it's simply impossible to recover. It's an unsatisfactory way to bow out of a contest since completing the mini-game has little to do with how well you might be boxing despite the knockdown, but it's better than receiving a token ten count or bashing buttons to get back on your feet.

ON YOUR FEET

The blurred images are also tougher to position if your boxer's eyes have taken a battering. The facial deformation system is amazing and to watch an opponent's face become more and more malformed as the fight rumbles on just spurs you on to try and make it worse. Seeing the damage you've received and inflicted at the

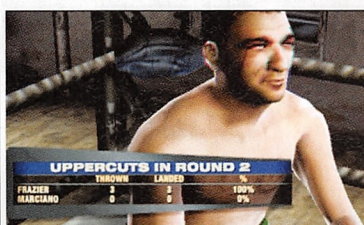
end of every round is great fun. If you come in at the bell with lips like Kimberly Davis' trout pout and blood trickling from a gash above one eye, your trainer comments on this specific damage as well as doling out advice based on your performance in the round. You also get to hear what your opponent's corner is advising, which proves invaluable regardless of whether you're trying to see out a match as the winner on points or looking for the killer punch.

It's a shame that you can't exploit the damage system beyond this level of reaping sadistic pleasure. Sure, a boxer's aim will go awry if his eyes are closed up, but in *Fight Night 2004* there's no such thing as a contest being stopped because a deep cut won't stop bleeding. Targeting areas of the face would have added another tactical layer, though we take the point that any such decision by a PS2-controlled ref would be annoyingly arbitrary – especially if you were on the receiving end. Winning a fight therefore boils down to pounding your opponent until his health meter empties (there's no clinching move in order to take a breather and regain energy), switching on the



NOT THE FACE!

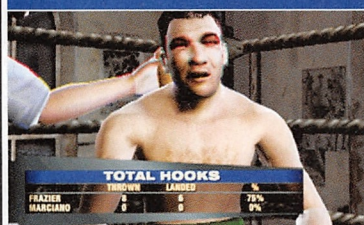
BUST UP YOUR PRETTY BOY OPPONENT IN JUST FIVE ROUNDS.



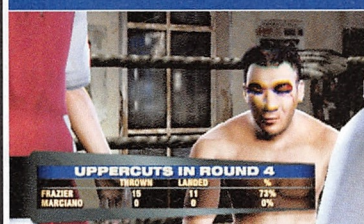
ROUND ONE Blood trickles from his right eye and there's a sign of swelling around the left.



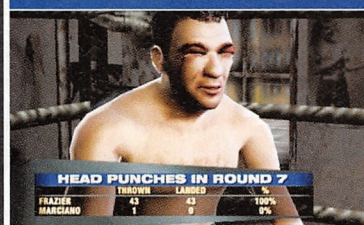
ROUND TWO The pain starts to show after we lay into the other eye and make it puff up.



ROUND THREE He can barely see now that both eyes are swollen and half-closed.



ROUND FOUR Now his eyes are taken care of, we decide to reopen a cut on his left cheek.



ROUND FIVE Both eyes are closed and even the mouth is bruised. Time to knock him out.



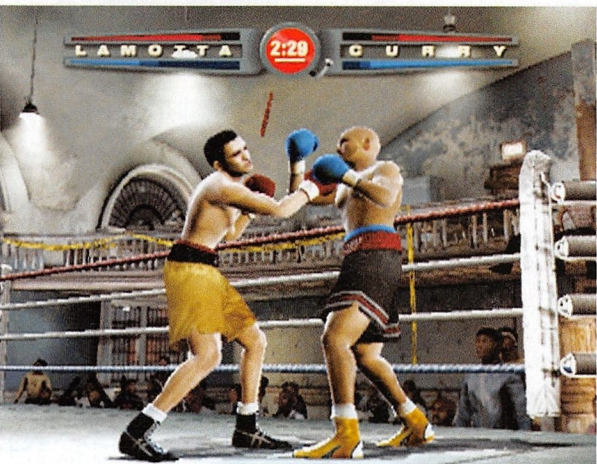
PUNCHING AIR Too much of this and you'll be knackered.



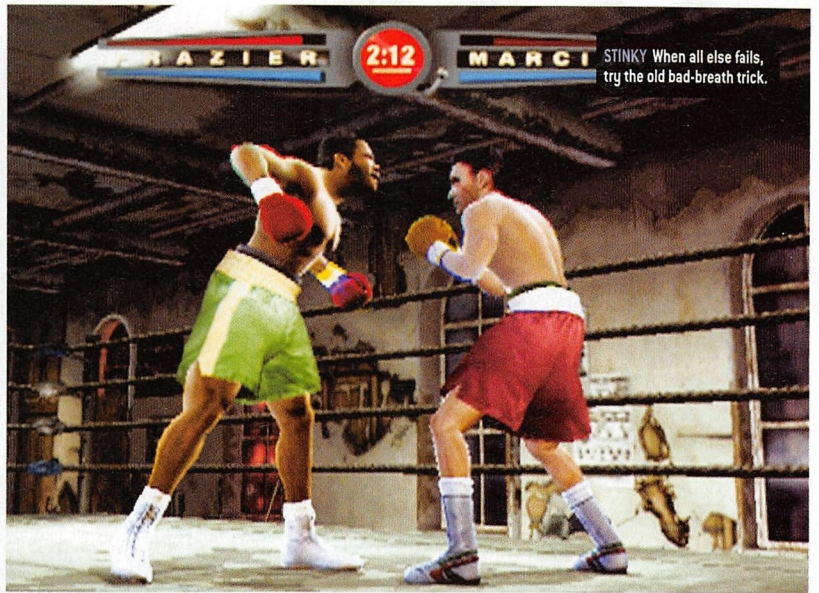
CRIMSON FOUNTAIN Land enough blows and the blood will start to flow freely.



BREAK IT UP LADS This is a boxing match not the Smackdown! All-Stars Supreme Royal Rumble...



KEEP YOUR GUARD UP Or you might just get stroked on the chin with a right uppercut.



STINKY When all else fails, try the old bad-breath trick.



SHAPE UP Fighting, or posing for an Egyptian wall frieze?

'three knockdown' rule option, or hoping the judges are on your side if a fight goes the distance. Judges use the 10 point system, where the winner of the round receives ten points and the loser earns nine or less. You obviously can't see their scorecards until the end of the fight, but by accessing the fight stats that show how many punches you've landed you can get a pretty good clue as to who's on top.

KNOCKOUT BLOW

So it's a good job that the improbably frequent knockouts are spectacular. When a boxer is close to hitting the canvas, the crowd noise becomes muffled and his slowed heartbeat will pound away. Thanks to cool-looking rag-doll physics we don't care to understand, the type of punch thrown affects the way an opponent falls. For example, an uppercut finishing move forces his body to rise and his head to snap back before his legs buckle. Better still is the way you can keep pummeling an opponent as he's on his way down before the referee steps in, even causing him to change direction as he falls if you're halfway through a powerful combo. It's all capped off in slow motion that captures every squirt of blood and every spray of sweat, with camera flashes and freeze frames accompanying every blow. The only glitch is

when a boxer lands on your feet or against the ropes and begins flopping about like a fish out of water until he hits the deck properly.

Knockouts are used to determine your ranking in the game's Career mode, which starts you off against fellow amateurs in the rundown local gym. A couple of wins will see you progress to better venues, culminating in the overblown Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas, where bigger purses, a greater choice of higher-ranked boxers to fight and the lure of big-money sponsors also come into play. As your skills improve it's also possible to move up a weight division for a greater challenge. There are 32 famous brawlers in total, including Muhammed Ali, Joe Frazier and Lennox Lewis. They all look incredibly like their real-life counterparts and in their signature punches they even demonstrate trademark styles. A few boxers are notable by their absence though, namely Mike Tyson, George Foreman and Oscar De La Hoya.

EYE OF THE TIGER

You can help your cause by visiting the training camp before every scheduled fight to participate in one of four automatically selected training routines. The higher your score after the time limit, the more points you get to share between two attributes related to that routine.

TRAIN TO WIN

MASTER FOUR TOUGH ROUTINES TO IMPROVE YOUR BOXER'S SKILLS.

COMBO DUMMY



Memorise and hit the targets as quickly as possible. One mistake breaks the sequence and you'll have to start a new sequence from scratch.

HOW TOUGH?



HEAVY BAG



Punch the bag on each side to make it swing. The higher it swings, the more bonus points you receive and the harder your boxer becomes.

HOW TOUGH?



SPARRING

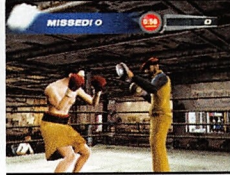


Attack your sparring partner while dodging his blows to rack up the points. Points are lost if you take a hit, points are gained if you hit him.

HOW TOUGH?

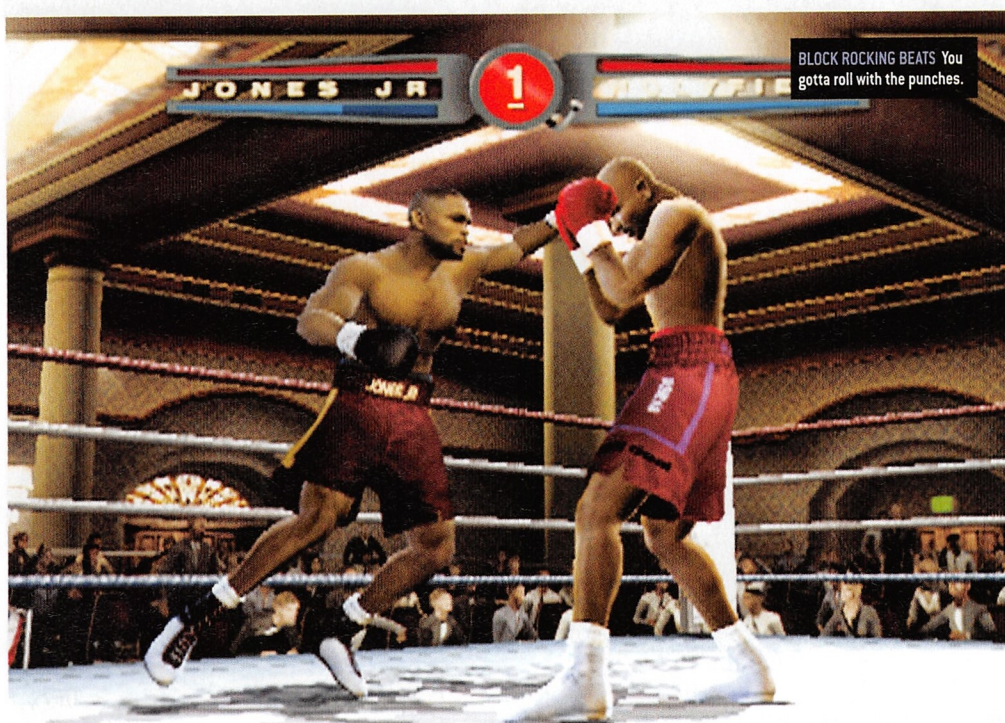


TARGET MITTS



Throw the correct punch to hit your trainer's pad depending on where he holds it. If you're too slow, he moves it, you miss and don't score a point.

HOW TOUGH?



BLOCK ROCKING BEATS You gotta roll with the punches.

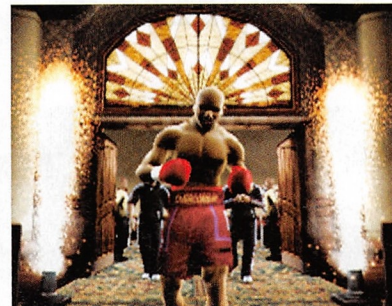
Achieving 10,000 points gives you the maximum 15 points to distribute. Sparring, which improves stamina and agility and is the easiest discipline to rack up the points in, lets you string together punches and defensive combos with points lost for every blow taken. In Target Mitts you throw punch types chosen at random by the trainer, which improves your heart and cuts ratings. Combo Dummy is a game of 'Simon Says' using flashing targets that improves your chin and body ratings. Finally, in Heavy Bag you must make the punch bag swing from side to side as high as possible by rhythmically timing your blows, which improves your fighter's power and speed.

The four routines are so useful that we wish you could play these training mini-games outside of the Career mode – not to increase attribute points, but rather just for practice. One-off exhibition matches are too fast to get any worthwhile practice unless you select a heavyweight boxer and choose a featherweight opponent. There's no playable tutorial as such either, only a rolling demo of a boxer going through the defensive and offensive motions. Anyway, the problem isn't that the punches are difficult to execute, as for all its subtleties *Fight Night 2004* is still a pick-up-and-play game. No, what's badly needed instead is an explanation of

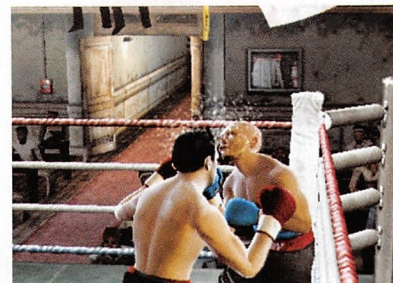
when each type of punch is appropriate, especially as there are so many to choose from. A 'when to' rather than a 'how to', if you like. Short of your corner shouting the name of the appropriate punch to throw (like some previous boxing games have done), more information from them during a round would have helped enormously. All they ever seem to do though is holler at you to keep your guard up.

GO FOR THE JUGULAR

Upgrading your fighter's skills and handpicking the higher-ranked boxers you want to beat unlocks a wealth of purchasable extras. Garish new trunks, shoes, gloves, mouthguards, waistbands, tattoos and taunts let you go down the Prince Naseem route of style over substance, while pyrotechnic effects such as fireballs and a selection of music and eye-candy entourage models can be roped-in to embellish your over-the-top entrance. Even the create-a-boxer feature gives substantially more options to recreate your soon-to-be-battered face and physique than, say, EA's *The Sims Bustin' Out*. More significant is the purchase of new signature punches such as 'The Sledgehammer' and 'Watch The Birdie', each of which packs a huge wallop but drains your energy bar, leaving you vulnerable for a split-second and can be



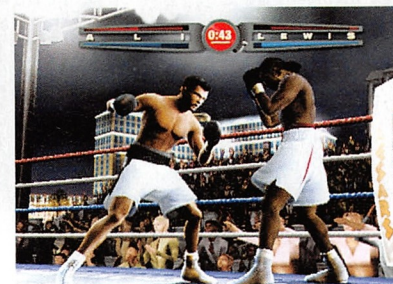
HERE I COME You can customise your entrance to the ring.



ON THE ROPES Back your opponent into a corner and 'ave him.



TAUNT Over here, you big girl's blouse! Your mama is such a...



seen coming a mile off.

It's precisely this combination of gloss and grit that makes *Fight Night 2004* so great. Yes, it's full of typical EA Sports touches that sometimes work and sometimes are a lot of fuss about nothing, but it's also one of the most tactical and highly strategic one-on-one games we've played. That's quite a novelty when you consider that every other boxing title is content to let you bash buttons like they're beat 'em ups. It looks like we finally have a boxing game that can truly be called a simulation.

/ JONATHAN TODD

PSW VERDICT

UPPERS	DOWNERS
> Control system	> No playable tutorial
> Highly tactical	> No stoppages, only K.O.s
> Mash faces	> No online play
> Rewards and unlockables	> Missing famous boxers

GRAPHICS > Watch in awe as faces get battered 8

SOUNDS > Feel every body blow and punch to the face 9

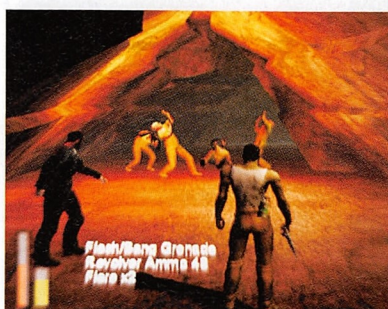
GAMEPLAY > More tactical than any other boxing game 8

OVERALL SCORE
Analogue control over the type of punch is the main reason why this game works and other boxing titles don't. Coupled with the excellent damage system this comes highly recommended.

8



SPLATTER Who wouldn't go insane covered in this much blood?



CAVE IN Violent flashbacks reveal the fate of past inmates.



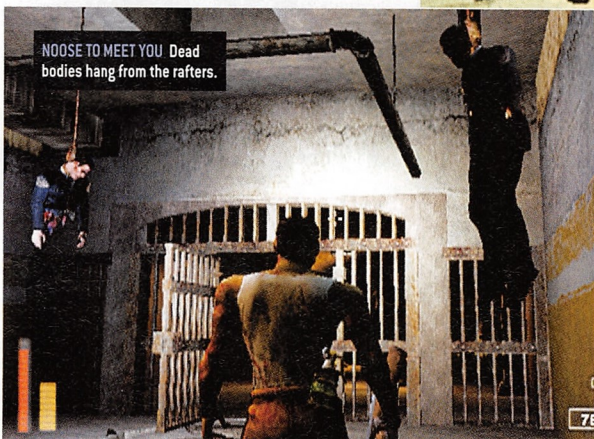
FOOD CHAIN The mutated creatures will also attack each other.



SCREW YOU Protect those guards who don't shoot you.



CELL HELL Horrific scenes lurk in every room.



NOOSE TO MEET YOU Dead bodies hang from the rafters.

THE SUFFERING

BUCKETS OF BLOOD, FIENDISH MONSTERS AND AN ENTIRE PROFANISAURUS OF FOUL LANGUAGE... LITTLE WONDER *THE SUFFERING* IS SET BEHIND BARS.



> TYPE	SURVIVAL HORROR
> PLAYERS	1
> OUT	MAY
> PUBLISHER	MIDWAY
> DEVELOPER	SURREAL SOFTWARE
> ONLINE	NO

IN THE FIRST TWO MINUTES ALONE WE counted at least six 'f***s', one rasping 'motherf***er' and even a 'c***' just for good measure. Add disembowelment, decapitation and impalement to the mix and *The Suffering* clearly isn't a game you'll want to show your granny.

But it isn't actually all that frightening either; at least not in a jump-out-of-your-sofa-and-drop-the-controller kind of way. *The Suffering* is more concerned with creating a tense atmosphere and swamping you with brutal images than delivering

a big, scary pay off. Creatures are glimpsed scuttling away down corridors, prisoners and guards are gutted on the other side of locked doors or on security camera footage while you watch helplessly, and creepy kids appear out of thin air, giggle for a bit and then disappear. It's spooky stuff.

A ramshackle, dingy prison proves the perfect setting for a game of this type. Periods of unnerving silence are punctuated by unexpected sounds of monsters cackling in the distance, inexplicable low rumblings and the crumbling prison structure. Best of all, the prison feels like a real place with a real history behind it; eerie flashbacks hint at the penitentiary's murky past and audio recordings of guards pleading for help or committing suicide help unnerve you further.

TEMPORARY INSANITY

The action occasionally moves outdoors into the prison's grounds too. These levels don't generate the same claustrophobic tension as when you're walking through the dark cellblocks inside with your flashlight barely illuminating the way ahead,

but they at least break up the procession of corridors until you end up revisiting some locations inside the prison near the end.

The story about a prisoner who might be wrongly accused of murder is all too familiar, but one of the game's strengths is the ambiguity of your character Torque. The flashbacks and fleeting psychedelic images of monsters that overlay certain action scenes provide clues as to whether he butchered his wife and two children or whether the prison itself is somehow responsible for the tragedy. Whatever Torque's culpability, he's clearly a bit of a mentalist anyway, and this insanity is conveniently measured by a meter that fills up as he kills. Once full, there's an impressive transformation sequence where he mutates into some sort of half-demon thingy that drains health but is able to take out groups of enemies with a single swipe of its claws.

The explanation for Torque's alter ego ties into the story's three possible endings, each of which hinges on your actions. When you meet fellow prisoners or guards, a female voice suggests you



LET RIP Yes, even the prison has mounted machine guns.

NO FATE BUT WHAT YOU MAKE

FOLLOW YOUR CONSCIENCE OR FEED YOUR DEMONS... YOU DECIDE THE OUTCOME.



Protect the prisoner who's lobbing Molotov cocktails at Slayers.



Help him fend off a series of Festers emerging from the water.



He tells you that the raft is booby-trapped, so best find another route.



Ignore the inmate's somewhat wild throws and go it alone.



Leave him to it and use the distraction to reach his raft.



Oh dear. Leaving him to die means you missed out on valuable info.



Your fate is sealed. Now you've got to live with the consequences.



DID HE? Flashbacks also give clues to Torque's guilt.

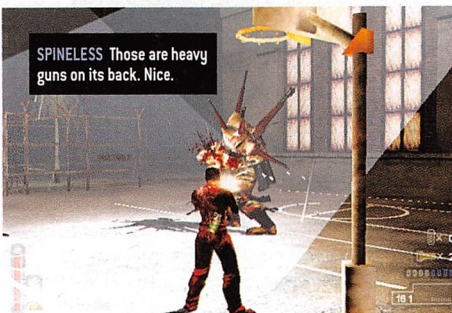


Use the L2 button to reload your weapon when ammo is low.

BRAINLESS Slayers can survive without their heads.



NO POINT Watch out for the needles they will lob at you.



SPINELESS Those are heavy guns on its back. Nice.



OUT ON A LIMB You can hear those scalpels a mile off.

work alongside them, whereas a distorted demonic voice plumps for the disembowelling option. To make the decision that bit harder their worth tends to vary from level to level. Prisoners are hampered by a lack of weapons but provide hints on the best way to kill the more powerful monster types, while guards pack the firepower but will still order you around and even shoot you for trying to escape.

TORQUE OF THE DEVIL

Not that Torque is ever short of weapons. He begins with a modest homemade blade but soon upgrades to a revolver, a Tommy gun, a shotgun and a flamethrower. It's the flipside of *Forbidden Siren*'s slow, methodical pacing. Ammo and health in the form of pills are plentiful and reinforce the impression that *The Suffering* is more of a traditional shooter than a survival horror game where you can barely scrape together enough bullets for a pistol. The more enemies Torque kills the bloodier he gets. Before long his face and clothes will be caked in the stuff and he'll need to use water to get it off.

Stan Winston [of *Jurassic Park* fame] has designed the monsters and it shows. There are only 12 types but they're all truly memorable and are mostly themed around torture and methods of execution. There's the Mainliner who sports glowing needles where his eyes should be, the Fester whose intestines have been replaced by rats, and the Slayer who has scalpels for limbs. It's quite terrifying when you can only hear a Slayer's feet clank on the prison's metal floor but not see where it is.

A few problems prevent *The Suffering* from being an essential purchase though. The third-person camera hiccups every now and then during combat, which means the first-person perspective is essential rather than optional. Bog-standard switch and box-pulling puzzles lost their appeal yonks ago, and the frequent swearing often feels forced when it should sound natural in a volatile prison environment like this. And if you're a fan of the equally bizarre *Silent Hill* games then some of the imagery and themes here will probably seem familiar.

The Suffering is a pulpy offering that takes

itself far too seriously. If *The Suffering* were a movie then it'd probably be *The Shining*, albeit a straight-to-video version rather than the big-screen classic. But we can just about live with that. It's compelling and atmospheric, and makes the most of its prison setting to create some stylish set-pieces. Worth a look if you can stomach the gore and tolerate the swearing.

/ JONATHAN TODD

PSW VERDICT

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| UPPERS | DOWNERS |
| > Creepy and atmospheric | > Lacking in originality |
| > Smart set-pieces | > Limited monster types |
| > Decide Torque's guilt | > Ancient puzzles |
| > Ridiculously gory | > Swearing isn't cool |

GRAPHICS > The dark indoor levels hide most shortcomings

7

SOUNDS > Chilling ambient noises and well-acted

9

GAMEPLAY > Solid shooting and survival horror elements

7

OVERALL SCORE

Forbidden Siren is more ambitious and original, but if you're after a steady stream of suspenseful build-up, action and gore then *The Suffering* is a solid stopgap before *Silent Hill 4* arrives.

7

MINI REVIEWS

A QUICK ROUND-UP OF THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY. BUT MAINLY THE BAD. AND THE REALLY UGLY.



GOBLIN COMMANDER

FOR THOSE PEOPLE WHO'VE ALWAYS DREAMED OF COMMANDING GOBLINS.

> TYPE	STRATEGY
> PLAYERS	1-2
> OUT	NOW
> PUBLISHER	JALECO
> DEVELOPER	JALECO
> ONLINE	NO

GOBLIN COMMANDER IS A BRAVE ATTEMPT TO MAKE PC strategy games acceptable to console owners. Usually the domain of pale, bearded men sweating over PC's *Goblin Commander* has been designed from the ground up to work on consoles. And to be fair, work it does. Control over your goblin horde is simple enough and well thought out too, with only single button presses needed to direct your troops into battle. Menus are designed around rotations of the analogue stick. Even when you're manoeuvring three tribes and a Titan – the massive lumbering war machines native to each tribe – controls are never fussy and getting things done is a simple affair.

The big problem though is that no matter how easy *Goblin Commander* is to play, it lacks personality. In part this is down to the actual goblin – generic Tolkein fodder, and a particularly flavourless breed at that. They are badly drawn, badly animated and entirely lacking in character. The problem with all this is that it doesn't help to prolong your interest in keeping them alive. Surely ninjas or pirates or robot cats would have appealed more to the potential console-owning strategists out there?

As things stand this game ends up falling between a rock and a hard place. On the one hand, it's far too simple for seasoned strategy fans, while on the other it's too bland and uninviting to attract the casual gamer. When you combine this with an overly short single-player campaign and a laborious two-player mode – that feels pre-determined to end in a slow war of attrition every time – there is little left over to recommend to anyone other than desperate strategists with a love of goblins.

/ JONATHAN TODD

PSW VERDICT

OVERALL SCORE

A noble idea let down by a lack of commercial and creative accumen. While what's here works, there isn't enough of it and it never seems able to totally involve you.

4



.HACK INFECTION

NO, IT'S NOT A SPELLING MISTAKE, STD OR HIDEOUSLY VIOLENT ADVENTURE.

> TYPE	ACTION
> PLAYERS	1
> OUT	NOW
> PUBLISHER	ATARI
> DEVELOPER	BANDAI
> ONLINE	NO

THIS GAME HAS A STUPID NAME. THE REASON FOR

this is that it is part of a "multimedia experience" including games, movies, a TV anime and comic books. As they all have stupid names, so the videogame is similarly encumbered. The story is set in the year 2007 where a networked game called "The World" is hugely popular. Naturally, things are not as they seem and it's your job to sort out the troubles. This is the first of four games, the last of which has just been released in Japan and its age shows. It's old and it looks old - sound and animation is poor and the characters look blocky and malformed. Thankfully, the gameplay redeems matters a little. This is a rather unique proposition, a simulated massively multiplayer online adventure game. It plays much like many adventure titles: fight monsters, gain items, become amazingly hard. However, instead of actually getting online and talking to real people in the pursuit of ultimate toughness, here the whole game is on the disc. The "game" world and the "real" world are both simulated for your gaming pleasure and it sort of works. Sort of. While the game mechanics are sound, suitably complex without being unintelligible, the idea of simulated reality leaves you feeling that you are either indulging in a very normal adventure disguised by little more than the video gaming equivalent of a hat and a false beard or alternatively that you should be playing with real people and making real friends. Either way, this isn't as clever as it wants to be and will mostly appeal to fans of the anime. Who all live in Japan and haven't moved to Britain because of the lack of stuff like this.

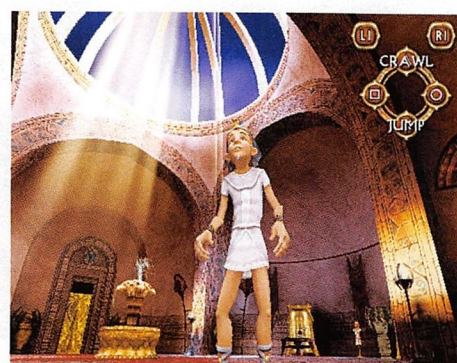
/ MARK SORRELL

PSW VERDICT

OVERALL SCORE

An elderly adventure with bizarre internet-on-a-disc style presentation. There are better adventures out there but they're probably not quite as weird as *.Hack Infection*.

5



SPHINX AND THE CURSED MUMMY

IF YOU'RE FOND OF GOOD GAMES WITH SLOW STARTS SPHINX IS HARD TO BEAT.

> TYPE	PLATFORM ADVENTURE
> PLAYERS	1
> OUT	NOW
> PUBLISHER	THQ
> DEVELOPER	EUROCOM
> ONLINE	NO

YOU KNOW HOW THE BEGINNING OF ANY GIVEN *BOND* movie often turns out to be the best bit of the entire film? Tightly choreographed action, high octane explosions, gunfights and an outrageously brilliant stunt before *that* music cuts in and the opening credits begin to roll. Well, *Sphinx* operates on the complete reverse of that formula.

Commencing with perhaps the duller opening hour or so of any video game ever, *Sphinx and the Cursed Mummy* is a triumph of poor pacing.

Thankfully though, it does get better. Most easily described as being like a *Zelda* adventure set in Egypt, what at first seems little more than a dull platform game slowly metamorphoses into a really quite reasonable romp. Despite any voice-acting the characters are quite charming, the quests are many and varied and the two playable characters provide two distinct rhythms of play.

There are problems though, the biggest of which is the save system. Why anybody would make a game of this scale without a quick-save function is beyond us. Half hourly saves are insufficient, and having to view a series of cut-scenes or complete a set of puzzles more than once is a tedious and hate-inducing task. The pace is often slow with only one objective available much of the time rather than the open structure constantly hinted at.

Still, there is much to enjoy here once you have battled your way past the excruciating pastry shell of the first few hours and got down into the meat and gravy filling below. With a little more thought and a willingness to strip out elements that didn't work this could have been an excellent game. As things stand it is merely good.

/ JOFF BROWN

PSW VERDICT

OVERALL SCORE

An excellent game let down by poor pacing and an archaic save system. Not a patch on *Ratchet and Clank* or *Jak II* but competent none the less.

7

MINI REVIEWS



RIDING SPIRITS 2

WORSE THAN WE EVER THOUGHT POSSIBLE. SOMEONE MUST PAY.

> TYPE	RACING
> PLAYERS	1-2
> OUT	NOW
> PUBLISHER	CAPCOM
> DEVELOPER	CAPCOM
> ONLINE	NO

HERE AT PSW, WE PLAY AN AWFUL LOT OF GAMES. WE also play a lot of awful games. That's why we're here — to keep you and awful games as far apart as possible. And we may just have found the most awful game of them all, right here in the form of *Riding Spirits 2*.

The bikes accelerate slowly, brake slowly and go round corners slowly. The graphics are dull, bland and flat. The animation of your rider is bad almost to the point of being funny; even when your rider is supposedly getting his knee down on a turbo-charged racer he still looks more like a prim and proper, tweed-attired country gent sat atop a 1930's Oldsmobile.

These are but the unpleasant entrees to a hideous main course which involves some of the blandest handling we've ever experienced in a game of this type; trying to get your bike to negotiate corners is damn near impossible. It took us no fewer than six attempts to get round the first corner of the first race without falling from our bike. Even the slightest contact with other riders or the kerb throws yours to the ground. Not that the short periods between crashes offers much in the way of enjoyment anyway. There's no sense of speed, even with the fastest machines, and your bike responds to your input with all the speed and grace of a sleeping artichoke.

No matter how much of a bike racing fan you are, there really is little reason for you to bother with this. Unless you feel the need to sate your curiosity as to what a really poor motorbike game plays like. If you really need some two-wheeled racing kicks then try out the turbo-charged *Moto GP 3* instead.

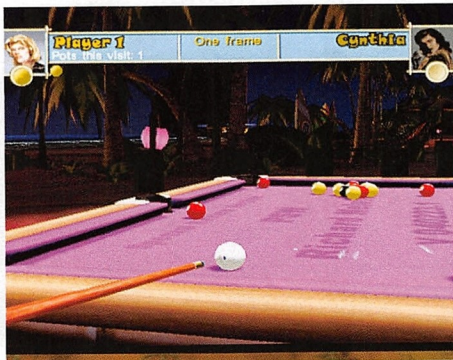
/ MARK SORRELL

PSW VERDICT

OVERALL SCORE

This is a terrifyingly bad game in every sense of the word. Poor graphics, poor sound and poor controls. Sucks enjoyment and happiness out of the world. Terrible.

2



POOL PARADISE

WHY STAY IN AND PLAY POOL WHEN THERE'S A PUB JUST DOWN THE ROAD?

> TYPE	SPORTS
> PLAYERS	1-2
> OUT	NOW
> PUBLISHER	IGNITION
> DEVELOPER	AWESOME STUDIOS
> ONLINE	NO

POOL PARADISE IS AN ATTEMPT TO MAKE VIDEO GAME pool perfection. Rather unusually for a pool game, it's set on a desert island rather than some unheard of Vegas tournament or in the back room of your average local boozer. Extras drip from every sun-soaked corner of the game, with a *Dropzone* arcade machine, a coconut shy and a really quite brilliant darts game all hidden away. Our guess is that the darts mini-game will have you battling away against your friends for longer than the actual pool game will.

There are also a vast number of unusual tables to try out, including L-shaped and hexagonal examples, all of which show off the finely-honed ball-bouncing-off-cushion-impressively physics engine to its full. Tables can be further customised with bonus skins — including a hugely fetching leopard skin affair — giving you the chance to play pool in your own personal pimp paradise. The only real gripe we had was the seeming inability to skip your computer opponent's sometimes lengthy visits to the table. Frustrating...

While this is as expertly composed and utterly packed with as many extras as anyone could ever ask for, at the end of the day, nothing beats the tactile joy of actually playing real pool. Pool was meant to be played in the pub with a few beers and a few friends, and no amount of clever programming is going to make up for the lack of real cues and real balls. If you are looking for a pool game then this is unquestionably the best we have played. We just can't see the point of the game in the first place.

/ JOFF BROWN

PSW VERDICT

OVERALL SCORE

It's always the same with pool games. No matter how good the physics — and they are exemplary here — video games will never match the easily accessible real thing.

6



SCOOBY-DOO! MYSTERY MAYHEM

BREAK OUT THE SCOOBY SNACKS! IT'S A GAME FOR KIDS AND STONERS ALIKE.

> TYPE	ACTION ADVENTURE
> PLAYERS	1
> OUT	NOW
> PUBLISHER	THQ
> DEVELOPER	ARTIFICIAL MIND AND MOVEMENT
> ONLINE	NO

TEACHING US THAT EVERY CRIME IS COMMITTED BY A bitter old man in a not-very-convincing monster costume, as well as the joys of unhealthy snacking, *Scooby Doo* was a formative experience for everyone in the PSW team. In fact, so untouchable was the hit cartoon, we'd even endure bloody Agro and Anne-Marie just to watch it. Then *Scrappy Doo* came along and ruined the party for everyone, the stupid little shit.

Blessedly *Scrappy* free, *Mystery Mayhem* takes its cues from the original cartoon. It's stunningly faithful to the source material, both in detail and accuracy, imbuing the whole game with a real *Scooby Doo* atmosphere. Sound effects, music and most of the voices are spot on, although *Scooby* himself does sound a little off the mark. Playing a bit like Nintendo's *Luigi's Mansion*, the game has players exploring a number of typical *Scooby Doo* locations. Unearthing clues, finding snacks and capturing ghosts are all part of the plot, and each level is presented as a new episode of the show. Battling ghosts is a simple but enjoyable affair; players must point The Tome of Doom at the spooks and then hammer one of three random and ever-changing buttons while running about to avoid the ghost's attentions.

This is what children's games are supposed to be all about. Pumped full of humour and detail until it's quite ready to burst, this is above average entertainment even for adults. Simple without being dull or repetitive, and as full of *Scooby Doo*-ness as you would dare to expect, *Mystery Mayhem* is a fun little game that made us smile. Sometimes you can't ask for anything more than that.

/ JON TODD

PSW VERDICT

OVERALL SCORE

A great way to get kids into games and ideal for anyone wanting a light, relaxing and humorous game to see them through an easy-going weekend. We're talking stoners here.

6

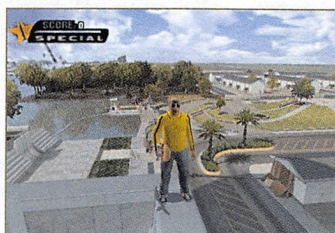
37 THINGS TO SEE AND DO IN TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND

Think you've got everything you can out of the latest Tony Hawk's title? Not until you've experienced this little lot, you haven't. Read on, and see what you've been missing.



1/ BUST THE LONGEST COMBO

C'mon. No matter what other thrills are out there, it's still all about the high scores. This shot isn't even close to our top stuff — think 8 MILLION if you want to get hardcore. We didn't show you our top score cos, erm, we didn't want you to get jealous. Yes, that's it...



2/ GET UP ON THE ROOF

One of THUG's quiet pleasures. Scale the heights any way you can and look down on your domain, without the imminent fear of skating straight off. It's a great way to spot the best gaps, and experienced skaters will spine off the roof onto a ramp for mad speed.



3/ ENTER EVIL TIKI'S WORLD!

Hawaii holds terrors of its own — namely Evil Tiki, the man-sized mascot of the Evil Tiki Company on a storefront at the back of the level. Jump into him to enter this crazed hell-world. Just another example of why developers Neversoft should be sectioned. Now.

“CREATE YOUR ULTIMATE PARTY LADY AND SPIN HER AROUND FOR A LEVEL WONDERING WHAT LIFE WOULD BE LIKE IF YOU COULD MARRY KYLIE MINOGUE.”



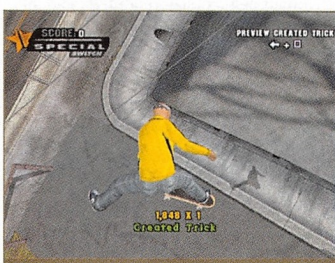
4/ DRIVE THE LEAF-BLOWER

Forget the cars in THUG, because they're entirely rubbish. The Leaf-blower is where it's at, letting you see Vancouver in style at around four miles an hour. Slow, but sexy. What's that, you say? There's a dune buggy on the KISS level? This is better.



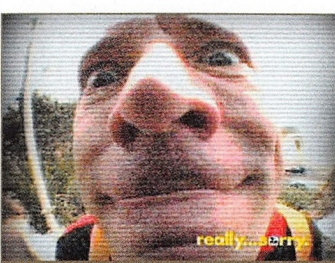
5/ BE A GIRL AND WEAR A DRESS

You've always wanted to, haven't you? So why not create your ultimate party lady and spin her round a level or two, imagining what your life would be like if you could marry Kylie Minogue. Go on. Nobody's watching. You dirty ape.



6/ INVENT AND NAME YOUR OWN TRICKS

Nothing says "I've played THUG to embarrassingly high levels" like coming up with your own tricks. Real pros will name them with 'hilarious' insults to friends. If you still have friends after coming up with tricks for hours on end. It has to be done.



7/ SPOT THE MENTAL SEX PISTOL BLOKE

Somewhere in the reel of team tapes, just as the world's snottiest kid is sounding off about how he hates the Sex Pistols, lead singer and mad-as-a-fishfinger celeb John Lydon's sneering mug fills the whole screen for a second. Get him out of here!



8/ FIND ALL THE GAPS AND MAKE 'EM

Another old-school Hawk's favourite that's easily overlooked because it's less than essential to completing the game. Nevertheless, finding all the gaps in a level is pure gravy to the initiated. This is skating, people, skating. Never forget that.



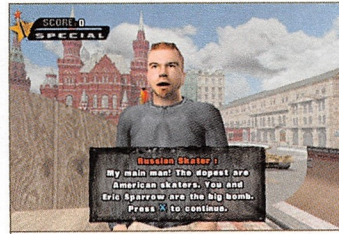
9/ BEAT OTHER PEOPLE'S PARKS

Here's how it works: go online, find some people hanging out in their own custom skate parks, get in there and own them. It's a fantastic way to earn your stripes, and it proves your impromptu skills in ways normal skating never can or will.



10/ CHEAT LIKE A BIG BASTARD

Ah, sod it. Cheats won't ruin the game for you, but they will add a new twist. Why not type *getitup* for moon gravity in the Cheats screen? Or *keepitsteady* for infinite grinds? More cheats are available online. Go look. We won't tell anyone if you don't.



11/ DISS THE WACK-TALKING RUSSIANS

Word to your brother! For some reason the Russian MTV wannabes in Moscow completely crack us up with their pseudo-punk speak. It's like Linkin Park grew up in Gorky Park. We should probably be beyond this sort of cheap laughs, but we aren't.



12/ WATCH NEVERSOFT SMASH A CAR UP

The end credits contain a mini masterpiece. Watch in awe as the THUG development team lovingly craft a custom vehicle complete with stencils and spray-paint, and then smash it up. We wish we had their balls. Not their bills, though.



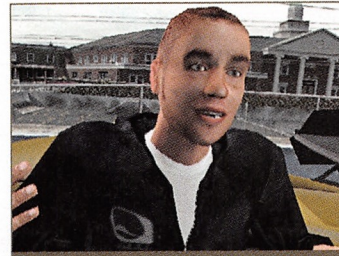
13/ PLAY IN THPS2'S VENICE LEVEL

Get the icon in Evil Tiki's world (see No.3) and you'll open up the beloved Venice level from Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2. It's all tarted up with flash modern graphics, but the layout's the same. No, it's not as good as you remember it, but...



14/ THROW FIREBALLS AT YOUR FRIENDS

Two-player mode is full of joy in any Tony Hawk's game, but THUG's Fire Fight is the daddy of all the less-than-serious competitive modes. Throw fireballs! At each other! To knock each other over! What could possibly be better than this?



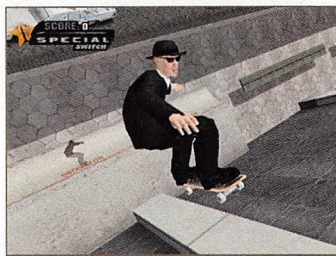
15/ LAUGH AT SAD OLD ERIC SPARROW

He whines. He hitches. He steals your tape. He becomes your greatest enemy. But somehow we can't help showering amused pity on Eric Sparrow. He's so ugly, for a start. So doomed to failure. So square of shoulder and flinty of heart. It's sad.



15/ UNLOCK MARVEL'S IRON MAN

Complete the game in beginner mode and you'll unlock the classic Marvel superhero Iron Man with all his stats maxed out. Do it on normal difficulty and you'll get Kiss's Gene Simmons too, but who really cares about that? Can he fly and fire lasers? No.



17/ DITCH THE SHORTS AND SHIRT FOR A SUIT

Don't hang around like a disgusting slob all the time. Make use of the extensive editing facilities the boys at Neversoft have given you and smarten yourself up a bit, like our vaguely threatening fella here. Snappy is the new scruffy, you know.

18/ CHECK OUT BAM MARGERA

The man could swim naked through a pool full of carving knives and still come out grinning. Watch the bonus video, marvel at the sheer number of times he manages to fall on various extremities, and wonder how this man will ever produce children.



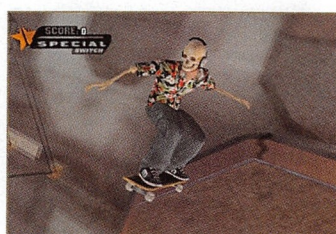
19/ FIND THE SECRET TAPES

It might not be the most important part of *Tony Hawk's* any more, but there's still a hidden tape on every level. Our best tip for finding them? Look to the skies and you'll spot the buggers. The one in this pic lives high on a building, not very far from a certain alligator...



20/ BEAT EVIL ERIC'S LINE

THUG's final challenge is tougher than a rhino in Kevlar underpants. Follow Eric's line across the bridges and telegraph lines of New Jersey, but watch out for the Molotov cocktails he throws. Remember, you're beating the clock, not Eric himself. It can be done.



21/ WEAR A SKELETON HEAD

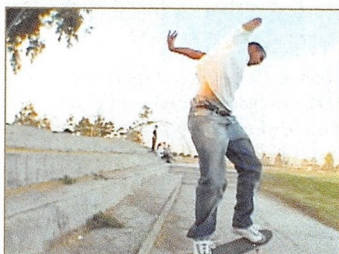
What would a *Tony Hawk's* game be without the opportunity to swap your ugly mug for a skull and your skinny arms for bones? Duller, that's what. Rattlin' good fun, and true skatepunk ethos to the core in ways we can't express, even to ourselves. Just do it.



22/ ENJOY THE WET BEAVER PARTY BOAT

Never mind that Tampa's party boat is covered in gyrating ladies, frat boys and kegs of 'brewski'. It's still a great little halfpipe that's surprisingly challenging to master, given its prominence in the early stages of the game. Keep a cool head and don't turn.

"THE FINAL CHALLENGE IN TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND IS TOUGHER THAN A RHINO IN KEVLAR UNDERPANTS."



23/ WATCH SKATING... WITHOUT A BOARD?

Some cunning CGI sees a skater grind down a rail on a board that isn't there before ollieing all the way across an impossibly huge gap. You'll find it in the team recruitment vids, which contain many a gem of real skating action.



24/ GO BACK TO SCHOOL

Of all the *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2* levels, School II is the most well known. Don't know it? Then get ye to New Jersey's station, check the quarter pipe at one end, and jump up to access it. It's high up, sure, but who can shrink from a challenge like this? Not us.



25/ WINCE AT THE BAIL OUTS

Ow... he didn't just... crap! Eeeuww! I can't watch! He's only gone and... aw, not the nuts — yep, right in the nuts! Oof. Bang. Wallop. Ouch... Unlocking the bail vids means you'll have access to some of mankind's most painful moments.



26/ ADMIRE THE HAWAIIAN BABES

The first time you see the sun-kissed shores and be-thonged babes of Hawaii, you'd be forgiven for thinking you'd died and gone to video game nirvana. Plus there's EVIL TIKI! We love Evil Tiki. He's not really that evil, you know. He's nice to us.

SUBSCRIBE

Why subscribe to Australia's only independent source of PS2 news, previews, reviews, guides and cheats? Because, of course, we're Australia's only independent source of PS2 news, previews, reviews, guides and cheats! In fact, we're Australia's bloody well best independent source of PS2 news, previews, reviews, guides and cheats. It's simple logic. Do subscribe!

HOW TO SUBSCRIBE...

INCLUDING DVD EVERY ISSUE

Every copy of PSW magazine comes with a DVD rammed with up-to-the-minute, exclusive PS2 footage guaranteed to keep you ahead of the pack when it comes to gaming knowledge. PSW's DVD is the best guide available to the world of PS2. Here's why...

We're always first with the games you want to see, and every month we bring you new, fresh, exclusive, unseen footage of the biggest titles around.

THE PSW DVD CONTAINS...

News, Previews, Reviews, Game Cheats, a round-up of forthcoming titles AND a complete library of every PS2 game ever released. It's the only way you'll get to see the newest games the same time we do!

1 2 3 4

Call us toll free on
1300 36 1146
Monday to Friday
9am - 5pm EST

Fax a copy of the completed
form, with credit card details to:
02 9699 0334

Cut or copy the form and
post it with a cheque or
money order, or your credit
card details to
**PSW Subscriptions,
Reply paid 634,
78 Renwick St
Redfern, NSW 2016**

Check out our website at:
www.publishing.next.com.au/subs

MAKE LIFE EASY

SUBSCRIBE ONLINE

www.publishing.next.com.au/subs

PLEASE TICK

10 ISSUES AT \$69.95 (incl. GST)

- ☐ I'd like to subscribe for myself
☐ I'd like to send a gift subscription

Enclosed is a cheque/money order made payable to Next Publishing PTY. LTD for \$.....

OR charge my credit card for \$.....

VISA ☐ MASTERCARD ☐ BANKCARD ☐
Card Number.....
Expiry Date.....

Signature.....

Overseas pricing available on application. Email: subs@next.com.au

PLEASE PRINT

My Full Name.....
My Address.....
Suburb..... Postcode.....
My Telephone Number.....
My Email Address.....

Please send a **PSW** magazine subscription to

Full Name
Address.....
Suburb..... Postcode.....
Telephone.....

TAX INVOICE Next Publishing PTY. LTD.
78 Renwick Street, Redfern, NSW 2016

ABN 88 002 647 645

PSW 021

WHAT'S ON YOUR

PSW

DVD



OH LORDY! WE'VE READIED THE DVD CANNON OF FOOTAGE HEAVEN AND WE'RE POINTING IT STRAIGHT AT YOU, FILLED TO THE BRIM WITH THE KIND OF VIDEOS YOU HAD PREVIOUSLY ONLY DREAMED OF.

FEATURE GAME



DRIV3R

GO BACK-SEAT DRIVING WITH TANNER.

As we buff up our leatherette backed driving gloves in tender anticipation of Atari's crime-fuelled smashtacular, here is a selection of audio-visual goodies to whet your appetite. Thrill to our new movies and literally die of longing with our simply splendid slideshow. It's more than mortal flesh can bear.

WOW!
BRAND NEW
FOOTAGE!



PREVIEWS



TRANSFORMERS

Join us in this look at the upcoming *Transformer* title from Atari. We've actually got this game in the office right now and we're in love. Watch to find out why.

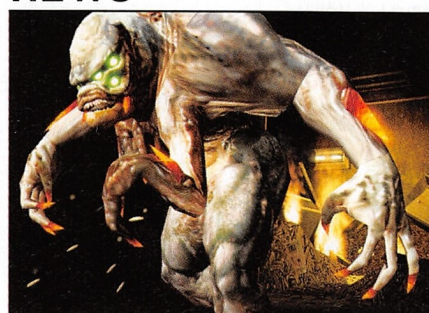
REVIEWS



THE SUFFERING

Creepy and often just a little bit disturbing, *The Suffering* is just what you'd expect from a survival horror blood-fest. Watch at your own risk.

NEWS



AREA 51

We treat you to some lovely footage from Midway's upcoming *Killzone* killer. Look - there's a gun! And it's being used to shoot aliens! EVIL aliens! Hooray!

DISC IN FULL

>> **SPECIAL FEATURES** Driv3r, Onimusha >> **EXCLUSIVES** Mortal Kombat: Deception, Silent Hill 4: The Room, Killzone, Gran Turismo 4, Splinter Cell: PT, Psi-Ops: The Mindgate Conspiracy, Resident Evil Outbreak >> **NEWS** Legends of Wrestling, Area 51, Neo Contra, Ghost Master, Monster Hunter, Shadow of Rome, Iron Storm >> **PREVIEWS** Syphon Filter: Omega Strain, Transformers, Malice, Onimusha Blade Warriors, Karaoke Stage, Way of the Samurai, >> **REVIEWS** This is Football 2004, The Suffering, MX Unleashed, Fallout: Brotherhood of Steel, World Championship Rugby, Pitfall: The Lost Expedition, Pool Paradise, Tak and the Power of Ju Ju, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles >> **BONUS** Slugfest Loaded, Jimmy Neutron Jet Fusion, The Fairly Odd Parents >> **SOLUTIONS** True Crime: Streets of LA, Spyhunter 2, The Sims Bustin' Out, Legacy of Kain: Defiance, LoTR: The Return of the King, Dark Alliance 2, SSX3, NFS, MoH: RS

EXCLUSIVES



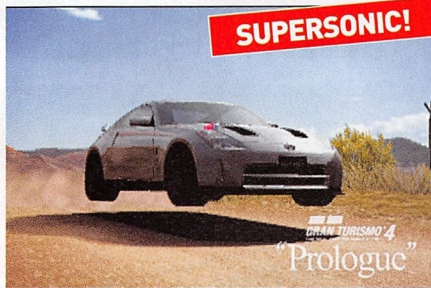
SPLINTER CELL: PANDORA TOMORROW

Super new footage of the next *Splinter Cell* blockbuster in action. See that lighting? See all that stealth? See Sam Fisher's black tights? Doesn't it look so cool?



KILLZONE

Here we present blood splattered gameplay footage of nasty people getting theirs in this shooting adventure par excellence. We've got it. Now. Be very jealous!



GRAN TURISMO 4

Watch the newest and shiniest cars in the world being expertly manhandled by the budding Schumachers of PSW. New cars and pack racing inside!

SPECIALS & BONUS STUFF

ONIMUSHA 3

SAMURAI SLASH-'EM-UP

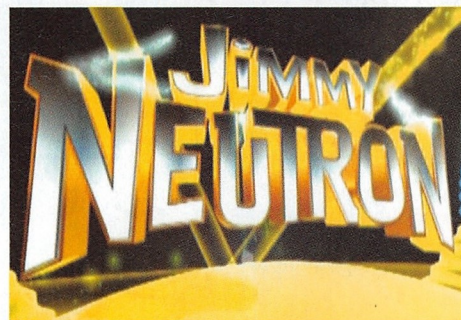
Lovely new footage of the upcoming *Onimusha 3*. Here you can get a sneak-peek at the two main characters in the game: Jacques and Samanosuke. As you will already know from reading our preview on p.48, Jacques is a gun-toting French commando type who finds himself suddenly transported back to Ancient Japan. Samanosuke, on the other hand, is an ancient Japanese samurai warrior who finds himself on the other end of the mystical teleportation stick and ends up in modern day France! Oh, what whacky hijinks will ensue from such a deliciously comic mismatch? Watch and learn!



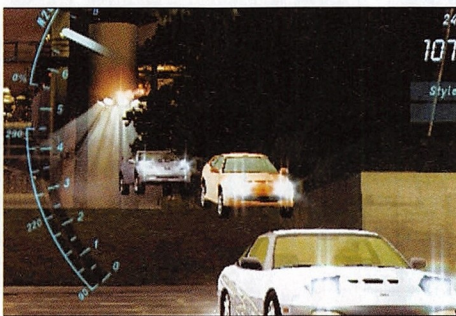
JIMMY NEUTRON

BLOODY KIDS AND THEIR BLOODY BOLLOCKS

To be perfectly honest, we don't actually know anything about Jimmy Neutron. Most of us in the office successfully avoided watching this particular trailer because, well, we didn't WANT to watch it. Aside from the fact that he's got a completely ridiculous name, we've got nothing against Jimmy Neutron in particular - it's just that this kind of heavily marketed kiddy bollocks tends to make our stomachs turn in disgust. At any rate, here it is for your... erm... viewing "pleasure". Enjoy.

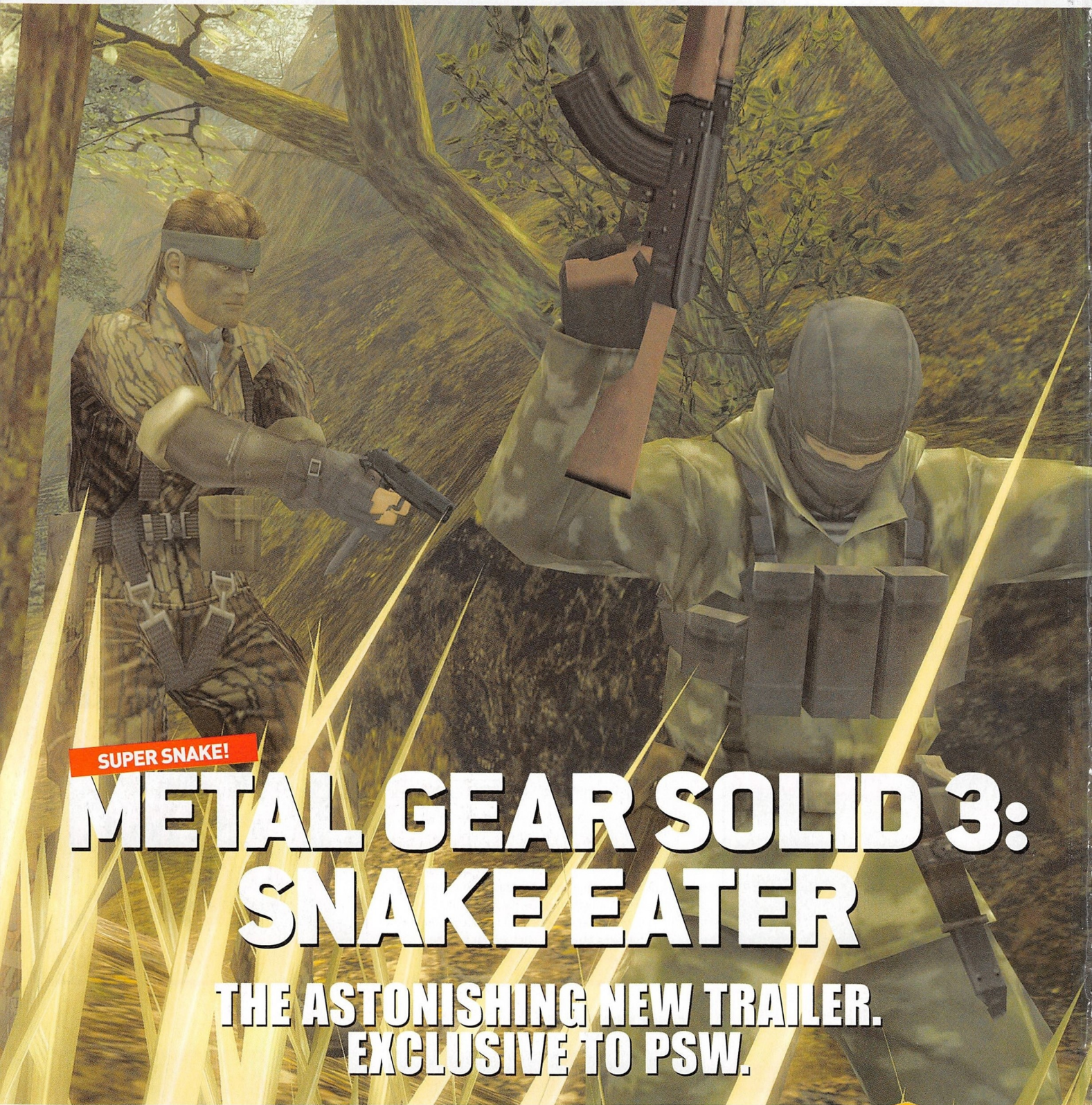


SOLUTIONS



For your own personal cheat satisfaction, we present a whole crapload of cheating cheats on your PSW DVD. Become a master driver in *Need for Speed Underground*, unlock all the missions in *Medal of Honor: Rising Sun* and conquer evil in *Lord of the Rings: Return of the King*. That's just for starters as we break open *Spyhunter*, *True Crime: Streets of LA*, *Legacy of Kain: Defiance*, *The Sims: Bustin' Out*, *SSX 3* and *Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance 2* for your pleasure.

PLUS!
DRIV3R GOODIES
CONTAINED
WITHIN!



SUPER SNAKE!

METAL GEAR SOLID 3: SNAKE EATER

**THE ASTONISHING NEW TRAILER.
EXCLUSIVE TO PSW.**

PLUS ALL THE LATEST ON:

**GOLDENEYE 2 • DRIV3R • TIMESPLITTERS 3 • KILLZONE
GTA: SAN ANDREAS • BURNOUT 3 • CONFLICT: VIETNAM**

OUT MAY 26. KILL FOR A COPY.

CONTENT SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE

**SUPER
SOLUTIONS!**

**INTERACTIVE GUIDES
TO YOUR FAVOURITE
GAMES!**

WIRELESS



BONUS FEATURES

UK's #1 peripheral range* hits Australia

Each product comes with at least one **BONUS FEATURE**

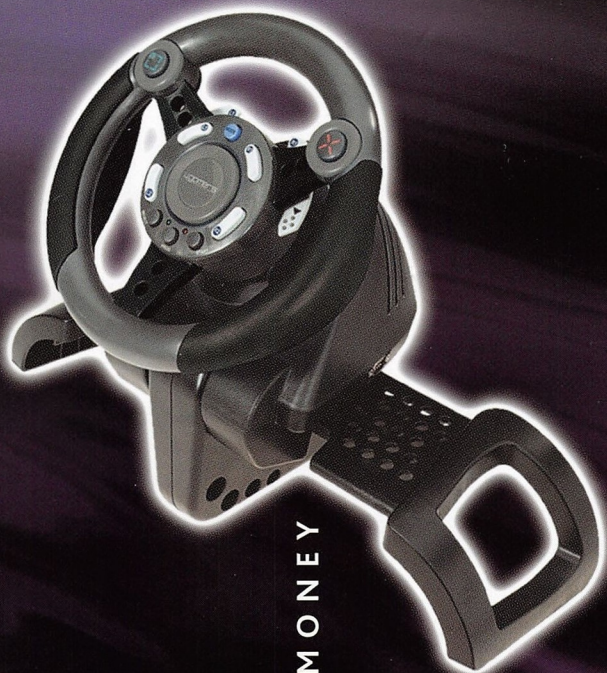
Quality produced with full **12 MONTH WARRANTY**

Optimum **VALUE FOR MONEY** ensuring lowest possible cost to consumers

CONSTANT INNOVATION ensures the gaming experience is always maximised

FOR A COMPLETE LIST of stockists and products visit **www.bluemouth.com.au**

MULTI PLATFORM



VALUE FOR MONEY

VIBRATION



4Gamers

THE OFFICIAL OPTION

* = Ref Chart Track 2003/2004

Broadband at Dialup Prices

\$19.95

MONTHLY
inc GST

FREE ADSL Modem

FREE Spam Filters

FREE Virus Filters

	TPG	Other ISP's
Monthly Price	\$19.95	\$29.95
Speed	256/64K	256/64K
Downloads	200MB	200MB
Excess Downloads	15c/MB, capped at \$40	15c/MB, not capped
Excess Downloads Exposure eg	1GB costs \$40	1GB costs \$120
	10GB costs \$40	10GB costs \$1,470
Email Addresses	5	1
Spam Filters	Free	\$2.50/mth per email
Virus Filters	Free	\$2.50/mth per email
Setup Charge	\$129	\$189



Call 1300 360 855

Register online www.tpg.com.au

Email adsl@tpg.com.au

Available nationwide, excl. Tas, subject to availability. The Free USB modem offer excludes ADSL Transfer. \$10 delivery fee is optional. Purchase by credit card only. Visit www.tpg.com.au for full terms and conditions. Minimum 6 month plan, paid monthly in advance, once-off \$129 setup fee and \$19.95 monthly fee. 15c/MB after 200MB downloads. Excess download fee capped at \$40/mth. Total minimum cost for first 6 months is \$248.70.

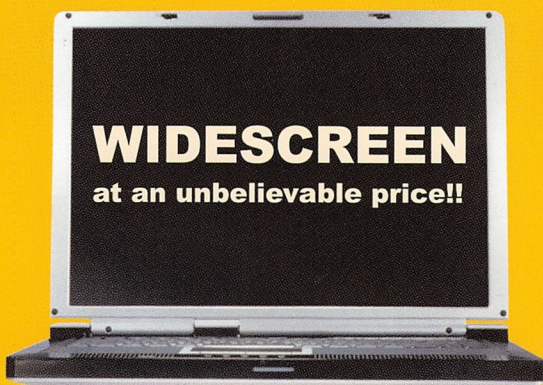
FREE ADSL Transfer **Transfer from your ADSL to TPG ADSL**
SAVE \$129 setup fee Participating ISP's only

TPG WIDESCREEN

Notebook

\$1,298

inc GST. By Delivery only. Standard fee \$99



WIDESCREEN
at an unbelievable price!!

- 15.4" Widescreen XGA TFT Display (1280x800 res)
- Mobile AMD Athlon XP-M 45W 2000+
- 256MB DDR memory for optimal performance
- Large 30GB hard drive and DVD drive
- 56K bit/sec V.92 modem
- Microsoft Windows XP Home Edition
- 1 year Return-to-Base Warranty (excludes software)

\$50
UPGRADE

Upgrade your DVD drive to a Combo drive: CD-RW & DVD

Burn CD's and play DVD's

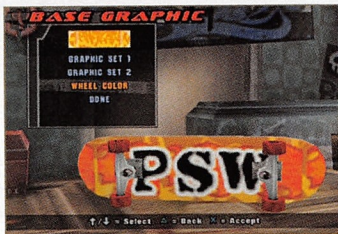
Register online only at...
www.tpg.com.au/online

1300 654 758



27/ MAKE THE LEAP OF FAITH

By far the most amazing stunt (certainly to watch, if not to actually do) is this stunning stunt over a chopper from a Hawaii hotel. You should be very proud. Until that fannybadger Eric steals the tape of the trick, thus prompting more tomfoolery.



28/ PERSONALISE YOUR DECK

Make your mark, soldier. Stamp your name on your deck for that personal touch. Provided it's only four letters or less, of course. Which ours is. Thanks be to the baby Jesus. As for you, think of a suitable acronym or just settle for a picture of a burning skull.



29/ MAKE YOUR OWN PARK OF DEATH

Once you've aced everything else in the game, you can always set yourself your own impossible tasks with the unbelievably comprehensive park editor. Or fart around in the pre-made parks like us, pretending you just don't have the time to do it.



30/ PERFECT THE CAVEMAN MOUNT

It's when you jump on the board from a standing start. It's the way to start your utterly enormous combo with style. It's brand-new. And it's called the Caveman, which is the coolest name for a trick EVER. Get in. Doesn't really add a lot of points, but it's nice.



31/ JOIN GLAM ROCKERS KISS

Hit all four Kiss letters in the final Hotter than Hell level, and glam rockers Kiss will perform for you. Why Kiss? Why not Eminem or The White Stripes? We honestly don't know. It's meant to be retro cool, we suppose. Hmm. Okay, we get it now. Yeah. Rock on!



32/ WATCH THE COP GET HIS GOAT

Duck behind the strip club and you'll find a dodgy cop eyeing up a goat's ass. Ah, Mr THUG, you and your disrespectful attitude to the authorities! Will you never learn, you scamp? Say five hundred Hail Marys and do three weeks' community service.



33/ GET INSIDE THE STRIP CLUB

It has to be done, though, doesn't it? Once you've seen the goat-boy cop climb the steps at the side of Tampa's most notorious establishment and you can leap right inside to watch some cartoon-like pole dancing. Silly as you like. No jokes about pole grinding please.



34/ PUT YOURSELF IN THE GAME

Only PS2 owners have the ability to put their own features in the game for an unnerving level of interaction. Does it really look like you? Well, a bit. With a bit of judicious tweaking, anyway. We only wish it was, like, a bit simpler to use.



35/ BUST SOME NUTS WITH A CAR

Everyone knows the cars in THUG are rubbish. Just about the only reasonably enjoyable car-based mission in the whole of the game is when you get to smash up the nut vendors' stalls in Manhattan. And only because of the smashing.



36/ ENJOY THE COOL SOUNDS OF YOUTH

Aside from, ahem, Kiss here, there's a hell of a lot of good music in THUG. Over 75 tracks, and don't forget, you can edit out the ones you don't want. Like Kiss for example. And just play the hip hop. That's just a suggestion, of course, but...



37/ SKATE ON THE INTERNET

And to top it all off, when you've waded through every other sight in the game there's still all that internet malarkey. Skate with up to eight players in the same park, livin' it up online. Now, where did we put our network adaptors?

**SUBSCRIBE
AND GET A
YEAR'S WORTH OF
PSW
FOR ONLY \$69.95!**

